

BREAKING THE BARRIERS (BTB)

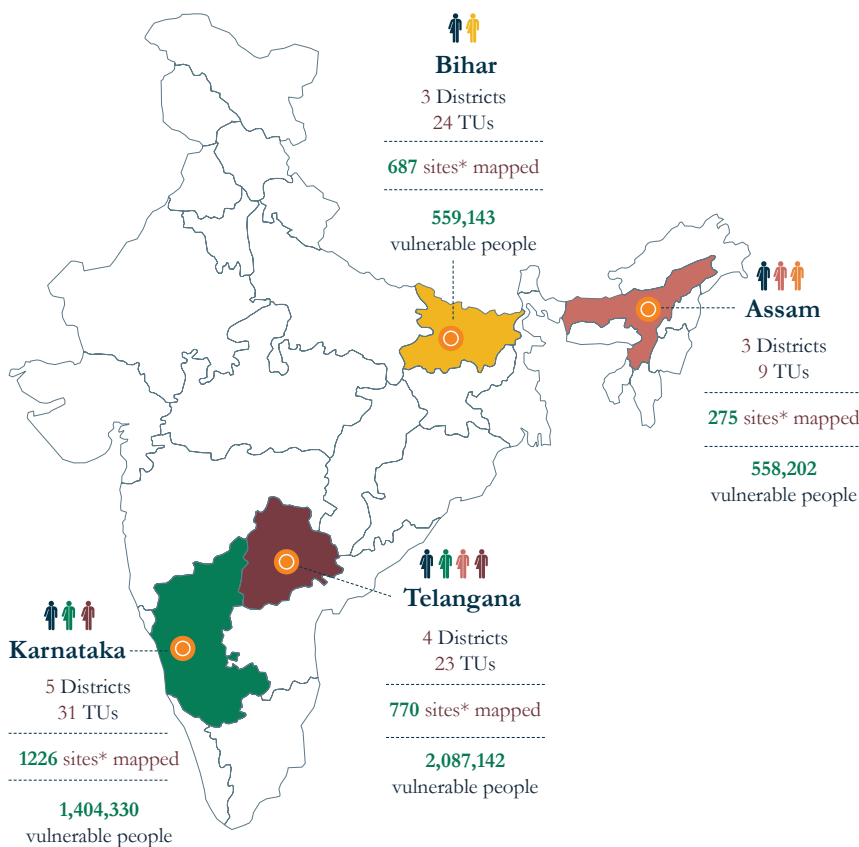
A community engagement initiative to accelerate TB elimination in India

Highlights and Key achievements - 2021



BTB PROJECT COVERAGE

Four States, 15 Districts, 87 TUs



* Sites denote areas where vulnerable populations are clustered

EXPECTED OUTCOMES



Develop and scale up effective behaviour change operational models that improve coverage of vulnerable populations



Increased case notification, and improved successful treatment outcomes in DS TB and DR TB



Urban vulnerable group



Urban vulnerable group (Metro model)



Tribal group



Mining & industrial groups



Tea garden workers



Migrants

HIGHLIGHTS

KHPT models recognized at national level

- Former Health Minister, Honourable Dr. Harsh Vardhan recognized KHPT's community structures initiative at the all-partners meeting, stating: "To train 3395 leaders from the community is the correct approach. If we train even one community leader, we can reach many more with the messaging for behaviour change. I wish KHPT the very best."
- NTEP launched KHPT's Community Engagement toolkit in May 2021. KHPT was invited by the CTD to facilitate sessions on community engagement at national-level Training of Trainers programmes for three zones.
- CTD issued a guidance document on community engagement to all states along with DO letter to follow the community engagement strategies developed in collaboration with KHPT in October 2021.

New initiatives

Towards A TB-free Gram Panchayat

The Graama Panchayath Arogya Amrutha Abhiyaana integrates the COVID Muktha Graama Panchayath (COVID-free Gram Panchayats) and Kshaya Muktha Graama Panchayath (TB-free Gram Panchayat) campaigns with the aim of leveraging the strengths of Panchayats to make villages TB and COVID-free. KHPT is implementing the initiative in 14 districts of Karnataka, including four BTB districts.

Leveraging Technology for TB screening

Dr. Arundhathi Chandrashekar, MD-NHM, Karnataka launched the initiative to use artificial intelligence for TB screening using Chest X-Rays across five districts of Karnataka, namely, Koppal, Bellary, Bagalkot, Belagavi and Chikkaballapur.

Showcasing community engagement approaches

● Observing World TB Day 2021

KHPT showcased the community engagement work through posters, films, project briefs, and infographics at the World TB Day event in Delhi. A message board was installed for visitors to send supportive messages to frontline workers.

KHPT hosted a webinar focusing on 'keeping the community structures at the centre of the TB response' in collaboration with USAID and the CTD. The discussion was attended by over 200 participants. The webinar report may be accessed [here](#).

Extensive print and electronic media activities were conducted with the highest levels of NTEP leadership, including Former Director General, Dr K.S. Sachdeva. Four articles and two television interviews were carried by leading publications. About **20 million** people were reached through a press release that was carried in over 100 publications. Two Facebook Live sessions were conducted reaching more than 2000 attendees.

A five-minute documentary produced by KHPT in collaboration with the CTD on the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme's (NTEP) sub-national certification process for TB-Free districts/states was screened at the event.

● Policymakers roundtable organized at Union Conference 2021

To highlight the importance of addressing gender and stigma barriers to TB care, KHPT and USAID hosted a policy maker's roundtable with the Global Coalition Against TB (GCAT) and CTD, at the Union World Lung Health Conference in October 21. The 90-minute session was attended by 130 attendees from all over the world.

● USAID officials visit Telangana and Bihar

A visit of the USAID Mission Director Ms. Veena Reddy was arranged in Telangana on September 22 to explain the varied initiatives undertaken through USAID-funded projects and facilitate interactions with TB Champions and community structure members. A similar visit was organized in Patna, Bihar, for Ms. Karen Klimowski, Deputy Mission Director, USAID on October 8 2021.

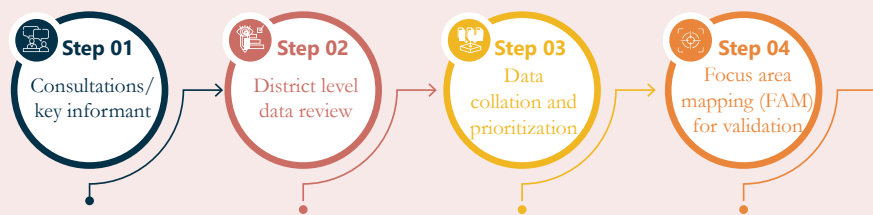
Capacity building and support

State Level workshop in Assam on TB Elimination and Behavioural Change

A two-day State level Workshop on TB Elimination and Behaviour Change was held by KHPT in partnership with the State NTEP, Assam, and the National Health Mission (NHM) at Guwahati on December 20-21, 2021. Fifty (50) representatives from 26 District TB Offices and **100** stakeholders representing the State TB Cell, WHO, partner organisations and vulnerable communities attended the workshop.

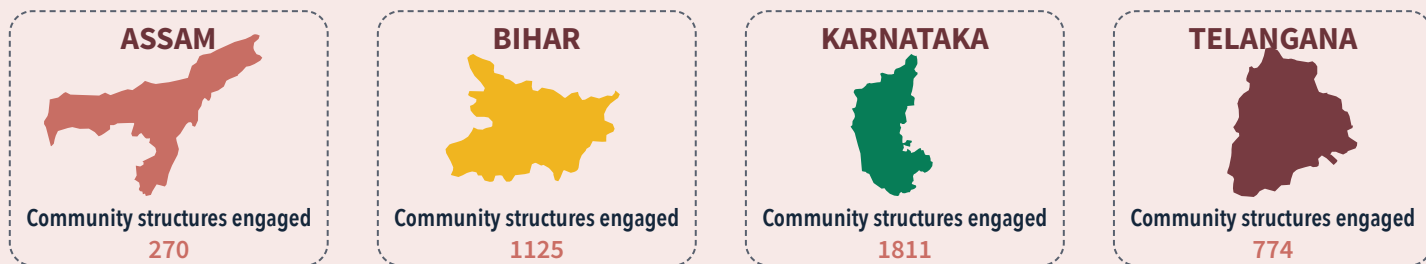
SIGNIFICANT PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

Completion of mapping of vulnerable populations

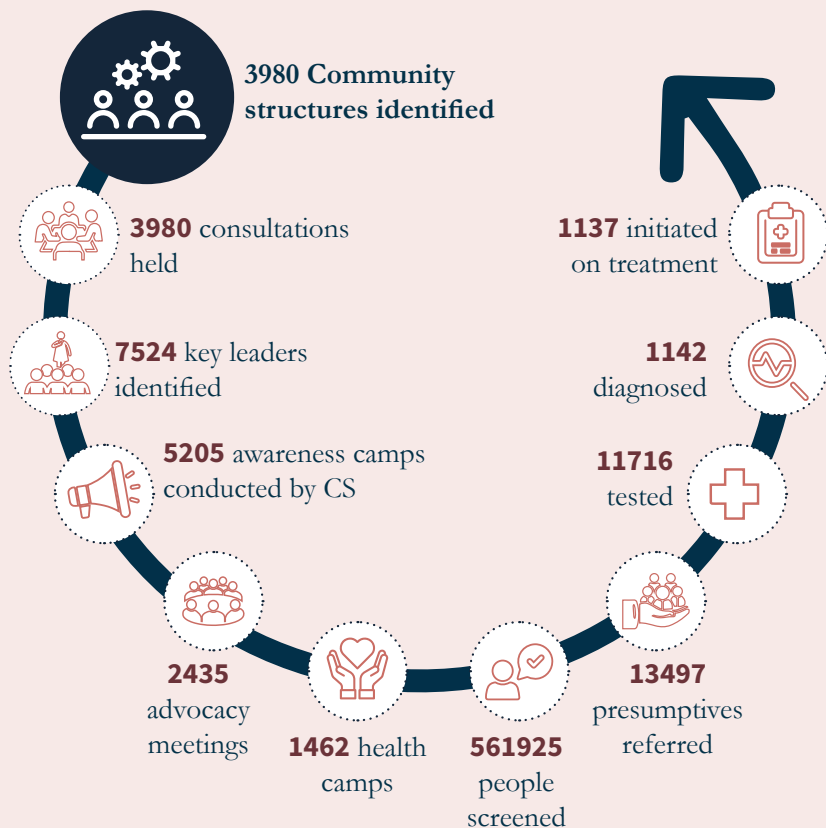


Mapping undertaken to identify populations vulnerable to TB infection in selected districts of Assam, Bihar, Karnataka and Telangana. It provided the project team an insight into the demography of the targeted population. Mapping has been completed across all four states.

Community engagement



Community structure engagement



Care & support groups

- 170 care and support groups established
- 967 NTEP and project staff trained
- 7679 TB patient benefited
- 671 TB champions identified
- 408 TB champions trained

Involvement of PRI and allied mandated committees



KHPT is implementing the USAID-funded Graama Panchayath Arogya Amruta Abhiyaana (GPA) program, reaching **2816** Gram Panchayats in 14 districts of Karnataka, covering a population of **4.5 million**. KHPT leveraged the GPA project to implement Kshaya Muktha Gram Panchayat activities in **250** Gram Panchayats.

27212 Gram Panchayath Task Force (GPTF) members from **2339** GPs across 14 districts were trained for screening of all persons with TB for tobacco and alcohol usage, and subsequently refer them for required care. **12815** members of **961** Gram Panchayats in BTB districts in Karnataka received this training.

873 health camps were conducted and **1294** presumptive TB cases were referred.

Behavioral change communication & solutions

Primary behavior change study completed	BC Solutions specific to each Vulnerable Population	Strategy papers specific to vulnerable population	Implementation of 9 priority solutions
Study led to development of BC solutions specific to vulnerable population groups	77 prototypes developed 18 solutions shortlisted, field tested & designed 9 priority solutions identified for implementation	Strategy papers for tackling barriers to health seeking behaviours and accelerating TB response for each of the specific vulnerable population in place	BTB and NTEP staff oriented in all 4 States Solutions are being implemented in 72 TUs of 15 districts across Assam, Bihar, Karnataka and Telangana

Advocacy and communications

Aligning with Jan Andolan

- KHPT hosted a virtual round table discussion on gender approaches to health during COVID-19 on March 5, 2021.
- **June:** on the theme of TB and gender KHPT organized a virtual workshop titled 'Gender Responsiveness and Stigma Redressal Workshop on Tuberculosis' on June 4 2021 in collaboration with USAID and the NTEP to address gender and stigma barriers.
A Facebook Live event titled 'Making Health Systems Gender Responsive' on June 29 2021, in collaboration with TB Alert India, the State TB Office, Telangana and the Department of Women Development and Child Welfare (WDCW), Government of Telangana. Reached 40000 viewers.
A video celebrating the frontline women workers in TB was released across all platforms ensuring a reach of beyond 70000.
- **July and August:** on the theme of engaging PRI and religious leaders live videos of PRI and religious

representatives were shared over Whatsapp, and social media extensively. Guiding documents on how to effectively engage with religious leaders and PRIs developed and shared with NTEP. These can be accessed [here](#).

- **September:** Podcast was organized with Ms. Blessina Kumar, CEO, Global Coalition of TB Activists on the theme of TB and nutrition. Reached 20000 listeners.
- **November and December:** A podcast series with REACH on topics of TB Camps, timely screening and stigma mitigation. Reached 7500 listeners.
A five part series with 'The Pioneer', one of the leading news outlet was published, to share case stories on 5 unique community level priorities and initiatives. Links can be accessed [here](#).

Communications to aid project implementation

A series of communication materials were developed under the projects in alignment with the Jan Andolan theme and also to aid in project implementation. Some of the materials can be accessed [here](#).

Research and learning

Baseline studies

Data collection for baseline mixed-method studies in the BTB was completed in November 2021. In all states, the studies took less than a month to complete, with the exception of Telangana and Assam, where repeated visits were required because of unavailability of TB patients from the concerned vulnerable groups as per the NTEP list during the initial visit. The finding of all studies were shared with the project team, with the exception of the studies among tribal groups and tea garden groups.

Positive Deviance study in collaboration with NIRT

Data collection involving, in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions for the study to explore and understand the psycho-social factors enabling drug resistant patients to achieve better treatment adherence and completion, has been completed in the study sites of Bangalore and Hyderabad. Translation and analysis of data is in progress.

Challenges and solutions



Challenges



Solutions

The new set of government guidelines on grants and the COVID 19 pandemic delayed the implementation of the project.

Innovative ways of conducting project activities were adopted.

Limited understanding of virtual platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet among the community structure members and TB patients was a barrier to conduct activities during the pandemic.

Field teams worked on ways to familiarize CS and TB patients on how to use these virtual platforms to engage during activities.

Inadequate supply of CBNAAT cartridges affected testing of referred patients from vulnerable populations.

KHPT supported the mobilization of cartridges through CSR funding. Discussions were also held with State NTEP to fast track procurement of cartridges.

Participation of NTEP facility staff especially MO in care and support meetings has been a challenge

Alternative schedules are being explored to arrange group meetings on care and support.

The selection criteria for TBCs were not being adhered to, during identification of TBCs.

Selection of TBCs based on level of self-motivation, interest, age, gender and educational aspects was recommended.

Gaining an entry and collectivization of tea garden and mining workers is a challenge.

Through persistent advocacy with employers and workers' unions initial breakthroughs have been made.

Availability of migrants in their hometown for a limited period makes consistent engagement with them a challenge.

Intensive interactions for engaging a large section of the migrants and their family members were planned especially during the festive season of Diwali and Chhat puja.



Community response

We fail to recognize that having safe spaces like the CSG meetings for TB patients like us is so important. In such spaces, listening to other TB patients like me gave me hope, and motivated me to live a fulfilling life. I used to think it's my fault that I tested positive for TB, but the group meetings made it clear, TB can infect any of us. We should not stigmatize ourselves.

Laxmi, TB patient, Bangalore



** Data reported is for Jan-Dec 2021*

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