

Leadership for Triumph: Community-led and community rights focused TB response

KHPT is implementing the Stop TB Partnership-supported Leadership for Triumph project, which aims to strengthen the TB response by implementing rights-based, people-centred strategies, facilitated by community-led monitoring forums. Its overarching goal is to reduce the stigma associated with TB within the vulnerable communities it serves, including Persons Living with HIV (PLHIV), urban vulnerable, LGBTQIA+ communities, garment factory workers, and female sex worker. The project is being implemented between May 2023 and April 2024, in Kamrup Metro, Assam and Bengaluru, Karnataka.



KHPT CEO Mohan H L calls for accelerated global research and funding to end TB

KHPT CEO Mohan H L made a statement at a high-level meeting at the United Nations headquarters in New York on the theme of “Advancing science, finance and innovation, and their benefits, to urgently end the global tuberculosis epidemic, in particular, by ensuring equitable access to prevention, testing, treatment and care”. The UN Secretariat granted special accreditation for KHPT to participate in the High-Level Meeting on the Fight Against TB on September 22, which was convened by the President of the General Assembly (PGA) during the 78th General Assembly. Speaking at the meeting, Mr Mohan said, “We need to accelerate global and national research, development, roll-out, and access to new TB vaccines, diagnostics, drugs, and other essential new tools, including digital health technologies geared to the needs of the most neglected, key and vulnerable populations. It is crucial to invest more funds to End TB.”

The members of General Assembly adopted the Political Declaration of the high-level meeting, reaffirming their collective commitment to end TB by 2030 through increased funding, clear targets, provision of lifesaving treatment and establishment of legal and policy frameworks to mitigate stigma.

Mr Mohan H L at the UN High-Level Meeting on the Fight Against TB

KHPT conducts Community Rights and Gender training for women SHG members and garment workers

In a concerted effort to address the intersection of TB stigma, gender and community rights, a three-day Community Rights and Gender (CRG) training was held in Bengaluru. The training, held on September 8, 9 and 10, was attended by 55 women Self-Help Group members and 100 women garment workers. The sessions adopted a participatory approach and encouraged participants to contemplate situations in which PwTB and their families experience stigma associated with TB. The activities of the training were centred around the development of mitigation plans to fight stigma associated with TB in their respective communities. The sessions conducted also focused on the basics of TB symptoms, diagnosis, treatment and prevention, gender and most importantly the unique challenges faced by women and sexual minorities in relation to TB related stigma. The training culminated with the formulation of actionable plans by the participants, detailing the support they would require to implement these plans effectively. These trained individuals are expected to become advocates for change, leading efforts to mitigate TB-related stigma and promote the rights and well-being of those affected by TB, especially women and sexual minorities.



Participants at the CRG workshop, Bengaluru

Breaking the Barriers

Breaking the Barriers (BTB) is a four-year project, supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which aims to develop innovative and effective behaviour change operational models that improve coverage of specific populations vulnerable to TB, such as the urban poor, tribal communities, migrants, and mining and industrial workers, for increased case notification and successful TB treatment outcomes.

Community Engagement

BTB teams across Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, and Telangana observe Ni-Kshay Diwas



Ni-Kshay Diwas at Baksa, Assam

BTB teams observed Ni-Kshay Diwas on August 16 by organizing various awareness-raising activities in collaboration with the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP) Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs), and Community Structures (CS).

In **Dibrugarh**, Assam, **21** people were screened for TB, **5** of whom were referred for testing. In Baksa district, **39** people were screened and **9** were referred for testing. In Sonitpur district, **109** people were screened and **13** were referred for testing.

In **Bhagalpur**, Bihar, Ni-Kshay Diwas was observed at the HWC. About **180** people including Community Health Officers (CHOs), ASHAs, and community members



Ni-Kshay Diwas at HWC, Bhagalpur, Bihar

were screened and **4** presumptive persons were referred for sputum testing.

In **Telangana**, a snakes and ladders game was played at various schools involving close to **1,500** school students to raise awareness about good food habits. As part of the event, nutrition supplementation was provided to **16** persons with TB (PwTB) worth Rs. 25,000.

In **Bengaluru Urban**, Karnataka, **30** awareness camps and **2** health camps were conducted, through which **3357** people were screened for TB, **43** of whom were referred for testing and **1** person tested TB positive. In Vijayanagara, Karnataka, the team conducted **11** awareness and health camps, across intervention areas through which **1371** people were screened for TB, **37** of whom were referred for, and received, testing.

TB Screening conducted for tea-estate workers in Dibrugarh

KHPT conducted an awareness camp and TB screening drive for tea-estate workers at Sessa Tea-estate on August 20 and Dhendai Tea-estate on August 30. The drive was organized in collaboration with the district NTEP, Sessa Tea-estate Hospital, and TB Champions. At the Sessa Tea-estate event, **45** sputum collection containers were distributed to the factory workers. The factory manager urged all the workers to undergo mandatory TB testing. At the Dhendai Tea-estate event, **700** workers were screened for TB during challan, the weighing time when workers stand in queue for payment. Of these, **32** workers were referred for TB testing.



TB Screening conducted for tea estate workers in Dibrugarh

KHPT conducts TB screening camp in Bhagalpur, Bihar with community structures and local leaders

The KHPT field team conducted an awareness and TB screening camp at Santhali Tola Diyuri, Kahalgaon, Bhagalpur on August 26,

in collaboration with the Jeevika community structure, the ward member, ASHA and Anganwadi Sevika. The camp aimed at identifying TB presumptive persons within the community, referring them for further testing at the nearest facility, and addressing the stigma associated with TB through awareness. At the end of the camp, a total of **375** persons were reached with information on the basics of TB symptoms, diagnosis, and testing, of which **215** individuals were screened, and **20** presumptive persons were referred for testing.



Screening at Santhali Tola, Bhagalpur, Bihar

Mining companies join hands with KHPT and NTEP to conduct Active Case Finding campaign

NTEP and Breaking the Barriers (BTB) KHPT, in collaboration with four mining companies, conducted an Active Case Finding (ACF) campaign at BMM Ispath Limited, Sri Lakshmi Priya Spanz Pvt Ltd, SLR Metalic Pvt Factory and Sai Vijaya Pragathi Steel

Udyog Pvt Ltd from August 1 to 5 in Vijayanagar district, Karnataka. During the campaign, TB awareness and screening camps were organized at all sites. The campaign focused on sensitizing mining workers about their vulnerability to TB, and the importance of TB prevention, screening, diagnosis and treatment. During the campaign, **2380** workers were screened for TB and **138** presumptive persons were referred for testing.



TB screening during ACF Campaign in Sai Vjaya Pragati Steel Udyog Pvt Ltd, Vijayanagar, Karnataka

Community structures and individuals provide nutritional support to PwTBs in Assam

In **Baksa**, Assam as part of a joint effort by District NTEP and KHPT, **16** Community Structures and **14** individuals from Mushalpur, adopted **30** PwTBs from the Baganpara TU in Baksa. Ni-kshay Poshan Kits were distributed to the identified persons during an awareness event by Mr Dipankar Nath, Sub Divisional Officer,

Baksa, in the presence of Ms Gunjana Saikia, Assistant Commissioner, among others.



A community structure member hands over a nutrition kit to a PwTB, Assam

Mining company adopts 145 persons with TB in Sandur, Karnataka

Sri Kumaraswamy Mineral Exports Pvt Ltd (SKMEPL), a mining company in Sandur, Karnataka adopted 145 PwTBs from the Sandur TU in Ballari District. The identified PwTBs were given Ni-kshay Poshan Kits during the Care and Support Group meeting held at the General Hospital in Sandur on August 22, in the presence of Dr Indrani, District TB Officer, Ballari.



Nutritional support to PwTBs, Ballari, Karnataka

Partner Engagement

BTB implements Employer-Led Models for TB prevention and care in Karnataka, Telangana



Launch of the TB pledge in Sangareddy

BTB is taking forward the vision of developing a multisectoral approach to end TB by working with mining and industrial workers in Telangana and Karnataka to implement an Employer Led Model (ELM).

In **Sangareddy**, Telangana, the project has engaged industrial workers through various initiatives such as 'Outgate TB sessions', 'Lunch break sessions', and 'Industry-led Monitoring'. 'Outgate TB Sessions', and 'Lunch break sessions' essentially aim at sharing information on TB with the workers while they are signing out of work or during lunch break. Industry-led Monitoring focuses on the employers' involvement in regular screening of their workers, and providing medical and non-medical support to their employees. These initiatives have gained much acceptance among the industries and are now being owned and led by the industry management themselves.

In order to ensure the sustainability of such initiatives, the BTB team, in partnership with the state and district NTEP, and with support from the District Collector, Sangareddy, launched a campaign on July 18 during which the industry management took a 'TB Pledge' to create a stigma-free environment for PwTBs. The TB pledge is a declaration and commitment to support their employees with TB information, education, care, and provide support services to people living with Tuberculosis, with official endorsement from the industry management and state and district TB officials. As a result of the campaign, 30 industries have signed the TB Pledge.

In **Sandur**, Karnataka, the BTB project encouraged industries to adopt a comprehensive programme of TB care and prevention, integrating awareness, health education, and service delivery using their existing systems, structures, and resources. The project has also established that by investing in the health of their employees, industries can enable early detection, diagnosis, and quality care and treatment, in turn

contributing to improving the country's TB outcomes. In this context, the BTB project in collaboration with the district NTEP and BKG mines, organized a two-day free health check-up camp on July 19 and 20 at their mining sites.

A total of 662 mining workers were screened at the health camps facilitated by Dr Bharath Kumar, Taluk Health Officer, Sandur TU, and his team. Workers were also checked for non-communicable diseases. The team also used this opportunity to get Aadhar details from 780 persons to link with the Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) for health insurance coverage.



A Screening camp in progress for mining workers, BKG mines, Sandur, Karnataka

Deputy Mission Director, USAID/India, visits BTB intervention site in Hyderabad

Dr Alexandria Huerta, Deputy Mission Director, USAID/India, visited the BTB intervention site in Hyderabad on August 24. She interacted with community stakeholders, frontline workers and state NTEP officials including Dr A Rajesham, State TB Officer, Telangana and appreciated their collaborative efforts towards TB elimination.



Ms Huerta interacting with a TB Champion during the visit

Director of Health Office, USAID/India, visits Telangana to learn about TB elimination efforts

Ms Michelle Lang-Alli, Director of the Health Office at USAID/India, visited the State TB Training and Demonstration Centre (STDC) in Sanathnagar, Telangana on September 5. She met with NTEP officials, project staff, and community stakeholders to learn about the state's efforts to eliminate TB.

At the STDC, Ms Lang-Alli met with Dr A Rajesham, State TB Officer, Telangana, Dr C Sumalatha, the epidemiologist at NTEP. Dr Sumalatha presented data on the number of TB cases and deaths in Telangana. The interactions were followed by a visit to the DMC and CBNAAT labs at the STDC.

Having gained an insight into the overall project goal, objectives, and approaches, Ms Lang-Alli met with users of some of the behaviour change solutions. Ms Taslim, a user of the Phone a Friend service shared her story of overcoming child labour and TB. Ms Taslim said that the telecounsellor of the Ph-a-friend service had been a close friend and had helped her to stay motivated during her treatment.

Mr Bonu Vinodh Kumar, a TB Champion, shared how he is helping other persons with TB to adhere to their treatment and more importantly, enable them to fight the stigma associated with TB. The team concluded their visit with a trip to the Fever Hospital in Hyderabad, where they saw the functioning of the TruNaat machine, used to diagnose TB.



Ms Lang-Alli interacting with community stakeholders

Government Engagement

KHPT organizes series of regional workshops on TB-Mukt Panchayat Initiative in collaboration with CTD, Ministry of Panchayati Raj and USAID

KHPT in collaboration with the Central TB Division (CTD), the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, and USAID organized a series of three workshops on September 1-2, September 14-15 and September 19-20 for the South Zone (held in Bengaluru), West Zone (held in Pune), and North Zone (held in Lucknow), respectively.

The workshops brought together participants representing the Department of Panchayati Raj and State TB offices from 21 states and Union Territories.

The TB-Mukt Panchayat initiative focuses on strengthening panchayats to fight TB. The primary objective of the workshop was to orient the state-level functionaries (within the PRI department and state TB program) on the concept of the TB-Mukt Panchayat initiative and the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions

(PRI) in ending TB. The workshops were attended by Dr Rajendra Joshi, DDG, CTD; Dr Nishant Kumar, Joint Director- Public Health, CTD, and Dr Alok Mathur, Additional DDG-TB, CTD, as well as representative of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR). Dr Bijaya Kumar Behera, Economic Advisor, MoPR, Dr Reuben Swamickan, Deputy Director, Health Office USAID/India, USAID, and WHO consultants were also present at these workshops.



Dr Rajendra Joshi, DDG TB, addresses the South Zone workshop, Bengaluru



Dr Bijaya Kumar Behera, Ministry of Panchayati Raj at the West Zone workshop, Pune



Dr Alok Mathur, Addl DDG, TB, at the North Zone workshop, Lucknow

Capacity Building

BTB trains Community Health Officers on the Family Caregiver model for TB care

BTB and the state NTEP, Karnataka, held a comprehensive virtual training programme between August 8-18 in order to upskill CHOs and equip them with the knowledge and tools necessary to respond to the

needs of the PwTBs and their families. The sessions, conducted online via the state's ECHO platform, covered 6089 CHOs in the 31 districts of the state. The training included sessions on the basics of TB symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention, addressing the stigma associated with TB, and providing guidance on family care for PwTBs.

Joint Effort for Elimination of Tuberculosis 2.0 (JEET 2.0)

KHPT has been implementing a three-year project on Latent TB Infection (LTBI) since July 2021 under the Joint Effort for Elimination of Tuberculosis (JEET 2.0) supported by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM). FIND is the Primary Recipient of the GFATM grant. This project is being implemented in six districts in Karnataka, namely BBMP, Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural, Belagavi, Bagalkot, and Vijayapura. The main objective of the project is to provide TB Preventive Therapy (TPT) to the contacts of persons with pulmonary TB.

JEET collaborates with NTEP to conduct CMEs for private healthcare providers

JEET worked in collaboration with the NTEP to organize Continuing Medical Education (CME) programmes for private providers in Bengaluru City, Bengaluru Urban, and Belgaum districts.

The team organized 3 CMEs and sensitized about 152 private doctors and paramedical staff on TB, NTEP updates, management of TB and Programmatic Management of TB Preventive Treatment (PMPTT).

The team requested private providers to support the notification of TB cases, as well as initiate TPT

for household contacts of microbiologically and clinically confirmed persons with TB. The resource persons for these CMEs were WHO Consultants, STEPS Coordinators, and Medical Officers of the TUs/ PHCs, along with the NTEP and JEET teams.

JEET organizes a two-day perspective-building workshop for project staff

JEET organized a two-day perspective-building workshop for all JEET staff on August 18-19 in Bengaluru. The workshop was designed to help the project team introspect while coordinating with different stakeholders, including the project intervention communities. It also aimed to help them understand their role in the organization and the TB programme, and how they can best contribute to the overall vision of the project and the organization.



Group work during the Perspective Building Workshop



Participants of the Perspective Building Workshop

TB Careline

The TB Careline is a free outbound counselling service for TB patients, supported by USAID under the Breaking the Barriers project.

Careline registered **821** new persons in the July-September period.

- **884** registered persons on TB treatment have completed their treatment successfully
- **1775** persons are on active care
- **18449** follow-up calls were made by the team for follow-up, registration of patients, and for post-treatment follow-up
- **60** conference calls were made by the team, involving **191** patients on treatment
- **56** TB Survivors who had completed treatment also attended to provide motivation and peer support

Phone-a-friend

- **113** persons availed of the use of the Phone-a-Friend
- **74** persons on treatment were reported to have completed treatment successfully
- **196** persons were on active care
- **1372** calls were made by the team for follow up, registration of patients and for post-treatment follow up

Case Story

Savitri Devi, a community structure leader in West Champaran, Bihar is at the forefront of creating awareness on TB in her locality

Savitri Devi is a 33-year-old woman who is the head of a self-help group (SHG) in Madanpur village, West Champaran, Bihar. She has been associated with KHPT for 18 months and has been very active in spreading awareness about tuberculosis (TB) in her community. She was invited to a training by KHPT where she learned about the symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment of TB. She was very happy to have this opportunity and felt that she could now help others who were in need.

After the training, Savitri Devi started to share information about TB with her SHG members. She also urged them to do home visits and refer anyone who was found with symptoms of TB to the nearest Primary Health Centre (PHC).

One day, Savitri's son started to develop early symptoms of TB. She was able to identify the symptoms because of the training she had received. She took her son to the nearest PHC and he was diagnosed with TB. Savitri was not afraid because she knew all about the procedure. The doctor assured her that her son would be fine if he followed the treatment plan. She kept her son on proper nutrition and he was able to complete his treatment successfully.

Savitri Devi has been a very active CS leader and has referred **10** presumptive persons to the PHC. One of these presumptive persons tested positive for TB. She is very proud of the work she has done and is committed to continuing to spread awareness about TB in her community.

Savitri Devi is a role model for other women in her community. She is a strong and determined woman who is not afraid to speak up about important issues.



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