

Lifeline Express Mobile Clinic

The School Health Programme initiated under the Community Health Initiative (CHI) in Thane District, Maharashtra, involves training of teachers and Student Health Monitors for early identification of disabilities in school children. Students detected with disabilities are tested in Impact's diagnostic bus for vision and hearing problems.

Since November 2006 the first Lifeline Express (LLE) Mobile Clinic has screened 11,494 persons, mainly children, in 166 locations in the tribal blocks

of the CHI namely Palghar, Jawhar, Dahanu, Mokhada, Vikramgad and Wada. Those identified with refractive errors number 3867 and are in need of spectacles, while 925 have been diagnosed with cataracts and 27 with squints.

Hindustan Construction

Co. Ltd. has sponsored another Lifeline Express Mobile Clinic which has commenced screening activities to complement the efforts of the first bus.



Children and adults waiting outside the bus to be screened.

What inspires Mohnish?

Mohnish Dongre, an Optometrist by profession, handles the functioning of the Lifeline Express Mobile Clinic. Mohnish "discovered" Impact in Palghar while he was working at a Trust hospital. A sincere desire to serve the community motivated him to offer his services for the Diagnostic clinic. Much alarmed by the number of refractive errors that he screened in ten months he says, "The idea of travelling in the tribal blocks of CHI was initially a challenge for me, but



Mohnish testing a school student for refractive error in the Lifeline Express Mobile Clinic

after seeing the overwhelming need and response from the people, I feel fulfilled". He would like the diagnostic clinic to be replicated all over the country. He says, "The disabilities of many children are not being detected and treated.. that is why we are losing our potential manpower which can take India to compete with the developed world". Mohnish is determined to make a difference and Impact is delighted to have him with us.

AURED trains LLE Mobile Clinic Staff

Mohnish Dongre, Manoj Prajapat and Vinod Shinda were trained Audiometry, at Aziza Tayabji Hydari's Aural Education for Hearing Impairment (AURED), in Mumbai. Specialising in Auditory Verbal Therapy, AURED has worked with hundreds of children around the world.

The training covered:

1. Pure Tone Audiometry: To identify impacted wax and damage to the ear drum.
2. Bone Conduction: Identification of the problems behind the ear drum.



Audiometry set on the Lifeline Express Mobile Clinic for early detection of hearing disability



Addressing Malnutrition through Tribal Art

Impact India Foundation aims at curing and preventing disabilities through its projects – the Lifeline Express and the Community Health Initiative. The reduction of disability arising from Malnutrition is amongst Impact's focal areas. In association with the Government of Maharashtra, Impact has initiated a programme to address the social factors affecting malnutrition by communicating health messages through traditional folk art forms. The programme, sponsored by Art Venture Holding Ltd., Singapore, aims at reducing the incidence of malnutrition in children under five years of age.

Information Education and Communication (IEC) activities directed towards adolescents and eligible couples address issues such as age of marriage, spacing of children, etc. The programme simultaneously increases awareness among tribals about existing Government schemes for empowerment to access them through community mobilization. Having commenced in Palghar block of Thane District, the start-up activities of the first year focus on:

- ♦ Educating the mother on child care, importance and frequency of breast feeding, health and hygiene and intake of nutritious food.
- ♦ Encouraging spacing and family planning.
- ♦ Increasing the marriageable age to 18 years and above.
- ♦ Educating the families on the importance of sanitation and hygiene.



A poster depicting the importance of hygiene



Malnourished children in the CHI

Through community sessions there is an increase in awareness on existing Government schemes, like the Matrutva Anudan Yojana (Motherhood Assistance) and the Janani Suraksha Yojana (Safe Delivery Assistance) to encourage the tribals to access and demand their rightful benefits through community mobilisation and demand creation.

Health/hygiene messages are imparted through traditional Warli (tribal) folk art forms, paintings on posters, pottery and on village social structures like Primary health sub-centres, Anganwadis (day nursery providing food as well), schools etc.

Tribal culture is depicted in audio visuals and street theatre using Warli music and dance.

The community is being empowered to effect behaviour change, and thereby reduce malnutrition.

Community action will promote nutrition and regular health check-ups for pregnant women, mothers and infants. Tribal women are also trained to prepare nutritious food from locally available ingredients. Twenty nine sessions have been held, attended by 2384 persons and 23 core groups have been formed to disseminate relevant information.



A health worker displaying health message painted on her sari



A poster depicting the importance of breast feeding



Rubella immunisation commences

Impact India Foundation, has donated 55,000 doses of Rubella vaccine and an equal number of single shot syringes to the District Health Officer, Thane, for immunising adolescent girls in the CHI area, courtesy Americares, USA, a humanitarian aid agency. As a first step, a training programme to sensitize 40 Doctors and Paramedicals of Thane District on Rubella vaccination was organized by Dr. Varsha Talegaonkar, District Training Coordinator, Thane on 9th and 10th July, 2007.

Target population –

Adolescent girls aged 11 to 16 years in Talasari, Dahanu and Palghar blocks.

Number of beneficiaries:

Dahanu - 17,520,

Talasari - 12,481,

Palghar - 20,505



The screening of eligible girls is conducted by Gynecologists and Paediatricians at the Rural Hospital, Sub District and Civil Hospitals.



(left and above) Immunisation of adolescent girls against Rubella in progress at Maswan Primary Health Centre, Palghar

Rubella in pregnant mothers may lead to severe birth defects in children

What is Rubella?

Rubella, also known as German Measles, is a mild, three-day illness characterized with rash. The Rubella virus can cause babies to be born with defects like cataracts, deafness, heart defects, mental retardation or, a miscarriage.

What are the symptoms of Rubella?

Rubella commences with a mild fever, swelling of the Lymph glands (especially at the back of the neck) and a rash that lasts for three days.

How is Rubella spread?

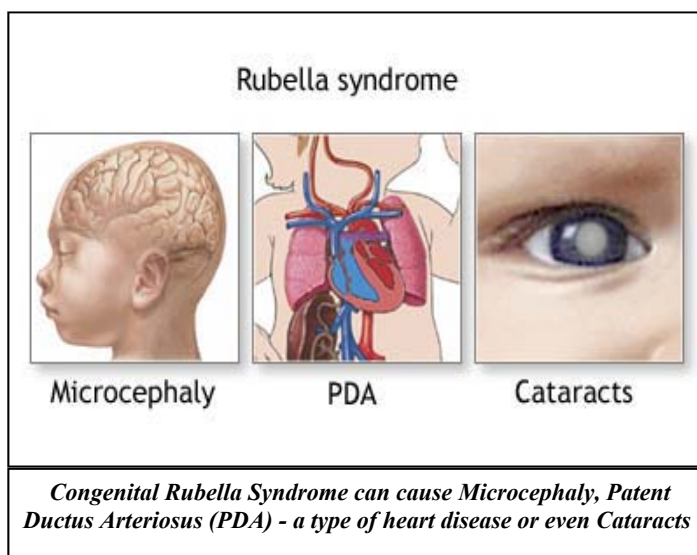
Rubella virus is found in the nose and throat of infected persons. Direct contact with secretions or exposure to cough or sneeze of the infected can spread the disease.

What are the complications from Rubella?

Rubella is not serious in children but can cause Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS) to the foetus when a pregnant woman is affected during the first trimester.

How can Rubella be prevented?

All children should be vaccinated with Rubella vaccine which is generally a part of MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) vaccine. Women in the reproductive age group should get themselves vaccinated to prevent deformities in unborn babies.





CHI's new office:



CHI staff with Zelma Lazarus, CEO Impact India at the new office

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Kitchen Gardens

Impact is introducing kitchen gardens in Ashramshalas (residential schools) so that children can avail of fresh fruits and vegetables at their doorstep.

Objectives:

- ◆ To provide fresh fruits and vegetables as supplementary food to the daily diet of rice and dal. Commonly eaten vegetables such as Spinach, Ladies Fingers, Tomatoes, Cucumber, Radish, Drumstick and Gourds will be grown. Trees such as Papaya, Bananas and Coconuts that yields fruits throughout the year will be planted.
- ◆ To raise awareness of nutrition
- ◆ To inculcate knowledge and skills of gardening
- ◆ To provide vocational skills in gardening for livelihood

Visitors to CHI in recent months

- ◆ **Dr. Raj Shankar Ghosh**, Director Immunisation India, Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH)
- ◆ **Ramesh Sarin**, Trustee, Impact India Foundation
- ◆ **Anubhooti Arora**, Program Manager, United Way, Mumbai and **Loic** a volunteer from Paris.



Dr. Raj Shankar Ghosh holding the memento given by Impact India Foundation with Kamlakar, George Rodrigues, Suresh Patil and Dr. Dhir from CHI at Palghar



Anubhooti Arora observes girls being immunized against Rubella in Palghar block

Impact's "Gandhi Book" is now available in Hindi at a low cost. For details contact Olga/Elizabeth at (022) 6633 9605/06/07

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