

## Glimpses of the Quarter

### Training, Workshops, Meetings and other Events

- The Executive Director attended the DCA Partners' Platform meeting at Kathmandu, Nepal from October 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015.
- The first Advisory Committee Meeting was held at the National Office on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015.
- A one day Workshop on Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2013, the role of ICC, redress mechanism and gender sensitivity was held on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015. It was facilitated by an external expert on gender and followed by a full day of re-orientation on the procedures on handling of complaints for the members of ICC on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015.
- All Unit Managers, members of the Management Committee, senior colleagues and other selected staff of the National Office attended the Programme Review Meeting held at the National Office from November 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The Performance for Year 2015 – Plan Vs Achievement as well as programmatic and operational challenges were discussed.
- A three member team comprising Mr Shaju Joseph, Executive Director, Mr. Bibekananda Biswal and Mr. Mukunda Sutradhar attended the AZEECON Communications Training and the Annual Planning Summit 2015 held at Dhaka from December 2<sup>nd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015.
- The Flood Response Program in West Bengal and Manipur through the ACT Preliminary Appeal (IND151) was successfully concluded in December 2015.
- The last Board Meeting for the year was held on December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015 followed by the Annual Christmas Programme and fellowship dinner for all staff, Board members and guests.
- The Country Strategy Evaluation and Organizational Assessment process for LWSIT has been initiated by external evaluation team since December 2015.

### Visitors

- Rev. Dr. Franklin Ishida and Ms. Dana Dutcher from ELCA visited the National Office between November 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> before proceeding to the Manipur Emergency Program being implemented by LWSIT.
- Ms. Andrea Erdle, Programme Officer-South Asia Desk, BfdW together with Mr. Abhishek Chandra from FMSF visited LWSIT National Office and the STEER-Rural Project in Bankura district on December 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015.
- Mr. David Smith, the Regional Representative of DCA, visited LWSIT National Office on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

### Forthcoming Events

- Organizational Evaluation along with visits to the National Office and Units is scheduled for January and February, 2016.
- Ms Karin Bodin, Programme Officer-International Department, Church of Sweden (CoS) is scheduled to visit the National Office on January 19, 2016 and the CoS Fund-raising team will visit GEP Bhubaneswar and Cuttack Units between January 19<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016.
- Unit Managers Review Meeting has been scheduled for January 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
- Representatives from Normisjon and DIGNI will visit the DSSQC and SEEPR Projects between March 1<sup>st</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
- Ms Andrea Erdle from BfdW has planned to visit the National Office from March 29<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016.
- The Evaluation Debriefing meeting has been set for March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016 where the Interim findings will be shared with various stakeholders.
- The first Board Meeting for the year has been scheduled for March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016 at the National Office.

## MY SPACE



The Annual Christmas Programme at LWSIT was held on December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at the National Office premises. On this special occasion, the Executive Director and the Board members shared the Christmas message followed by a nativity play and fellowship dinner for all the staff and guests.



Sit and Draw competitions were held in all Units on the occasion of Children's Day, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The best drawings featured in the LWSIT Annual Calendars for 2016.



# LUTHERAN WORLD SERVICE INDIA TRUST

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NEWSLETTER

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## Orange the World: End Violence Against Women and Girls



Paris henceforth known as **Human Rights Day**. The General Assembly proclaims the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to be "a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations".

The *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)*, which were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 16 December 1966 and entered into force in 1976, together with the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, form the *International Bill of Human Rights*, setting out the civil, political, cultural, economic, and social rights of all human beings. The two Covenants are legally binding treaties for the States that are parties. **168** States are party to the **ICCPR** and **164** States are party to the **ICESCR** today.

**ICESCR and the ICCPR**. The slogan, "**Our Rights. Our Freedoms. Always.**", aims to promote and raise awareness of the two Covenants focussing on the theme of rights and the Four Freedoms - **freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear** - which underpin the International Bill of Human Rights and are as relevant today as they were 50 years ago.

The "**16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence**" is a global campaign that starts on **November 25** i.e. **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women** and continues till **December 10, Human Rights Day**. These dates were chosen to emphasize that gender-based violence is an international human rights violation. This campaign was initiated in 1991 at the first Women's Global Leadership Institute (WGLI) held by the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) at Rutgers University as a strategy to build awareness about gender-based violence and to facilitate networking among women leaders who are working in this area.



Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt with the first Universal Declaration of Human Rights

As World War II came to an end, it left in its wake cities in Europe and Asia in ruins with millions of people dead, and millions more homeless and starving. The international community vowed to never allow such atrocities to occur again and thus, the Charter of the United Nations came into effect on **October 24, 1945** which has henceforth been observed as **United Nations Day**.

In 1948, under the dynamic leadership of Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt, the new Human Rights Commission and representatives of different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world set out to draft the document that became the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**. The UDHR is a milestone document in the history of human rights and was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on **December 10, 1948** at the Palais de Chaillot,

India ratified the ICCPR and the ICESCR on April 10, 1979 and it came into force on July 10, 1979.

Human Rights Day this year was devoted to a year-long campaign to mark the **50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the two International Covenants on Human Rights**, i.e. the

Violence Against Women continues to be one of the most prevalent and least recognised human rights violations in the world. Women in India face many forms of violence from 'womb to tomb', which take on the form of domestic violence, sexual assault, public humiliation, abuse, trafficking and 'honour' killing. They experience violence within their homes as well as at public places. Evidence shows that 70 per cent of women and girls face some form of violence in their lifetime.

This year, the United Nations Secretary-General's Campaign **UNITE to End Violence against Women** invites us to "**Orange the world: End violence against women and girls**".





A procession organized by the community women on the occasion of International Day on the Elimination of Violence Against Women



SHG members sharing about their involvement in reducing alcohol consumption, resolving cases of domestic violence and divorce in their communities



The Laxmi SHG members whose intervention saved Umaboti's life and future



Umaboti, after the timely intervention of the SHG members and LWSIT personnel

## International Day on the Elimination of Violence Against Women – STEER Rural Subarnapur

The *International Day on the Elimination of Violence against Women* was celebrated jointly by 32 communities under STEER Rural Subarnapur Unit on November 25, 2015. Among the 121 women and 55 men who participated, there were members and leaders of SHGs, members and leaders of the *Mahasangha* and PRI members.

The program started with a rally around the communities voicing slogans on the significance of the day. LWSIT welcomed all the participants and shared briefly on the objective and purpose of the day's celebration which was to empower women and highlight the pressing need to eliminate all kinds of violence against women including domestic violence, harassment, and torture. This program served as a platform for sharing and dissemination of essential information. This was followed by various competitions based on the elimination of violence against women.

Some of the SHGs shared about their involvement in their communities particularly in reducing the incidence of alcohol-induced problems within families. Through the tireless intervention of these SHG members, the men reduced their intake of alcohol and are instead engaging in productive work alongside their wives. Also, the women's groups from 9 communities have taken stern action to stop the sale of alcohol in their community and surrounding areas. These bold actions by the women were possible only because of their empowerment through the many training programs, awareness camps and meetings that they had attended. As a result of this empowerment, the women have taken steps to resolve issues of domestic violence as well as some divorce cases within families.

## "Safeguarding Child Rights" - DSSQC Birbhum

This is the story of Umaboti, a 14 year old girl living with her brother, Sanjoy, in Patharkata Bhuinapara community of Birbhum. Since the demise of their mother, the father, Mr Ganesh Roy remarried and lives with his second wife and two children in another village, leaving Umaboti and Sanjoy to fend for themselves. Umaboti is differently abled (hearing and vocal impaired) and since there is no one to care for her or her brother, they were both compelled to drop out of school to collect and sell fuel wood or undertake cattle herding to scrape out a livelihood.

In the first week of August, Ganesh and his second wife Manju finalized Umaboti's marriage through a middle man for which Ganesh would pay INR 20,000 to the groom as compensation owing to Umaboti's disabilities. Sanjoy overheard this plan and immediately shared this information with his neighbours and members of *Laxmi Sayang Sahayak Samuha (SSS)* i.e. the local Self Help Group. In the third week of August, a vehicle carrying four unknown persons came to the Patharkata Bhuinapara community. Immediately the SHG members gathered outside Umaboti's home and informed the LWSIT staff who in turn called for the police. With significant pressure from the SHG members, Umaboti's parents as well as the outsiders confessed their plan to force Umaboti, a minor, into marriage with an unknown man. However, before the police could arrive the outsiders escaped. Soon after, Umaboti's father and step-mother confessed their plan and that they considered Umaboti a liability.

With the timely intervention of the *Laxmi SSS* members Umaboti's life and future were spared from ruin at the hands of an unknown man. Umaboti and her brother are now living with their Uncle and Aunty. With help from the SHG, she is able to engage in small income generating (IG) schemes. Umaboti has the opportunity to now fulfill her dreams and lead a life as per her choice and decision.

## International Human Rights Day – STEER Rural Puri and Kendrapada

The theme for this year's Human Rights Day was "Our Rights. Our Freedoms. Always." and the day was observed in all the Units on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015 in collaboration with other NGO partners as well as the Government Departments.

In *STEER Rural Puri Unit*, Mr Gopal Chandra Mohapatra, Assistant Director, Meteorological Department, spoke on the significance of human rights and the need for protection of these rights by the Government. He stressed on revolutionizing women empowerment and to raise a voice against exploitation and injustice in this country. The various NGO representatives, educationalists, advocates, school teachers and women members from different SHGs participated in the programme on the themes of ending all forms of discrimination and violence against women as well as on the right to education and legal rights of all women. This was followed by a mass rally by the Women's Federation. The programme concluded with a street play organized by a local civil society organization about "Our rights, our hand".

International Human Rights Day was observed by 268 women and men from 5 DMTs in Bramhanianta village under *STEER Rural Kendrapada Unit*. The events included a mass rally, debates and role playing. This special program was attended by Mr Ajay Samal, Principal of Tulasi Women's College, Kendrapada, school teachers, intellectuals and journalists who spoke on various issues stressing on the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities. Five groups role-played various real life situations of human rights violations within the community as well as the solution to fight such violations. At the end the guests gave prizes to the best participants.

## "Equal Rights through Women's intervention" - DSSQC Dumka

The JamrupaniChitanTola community of Shikaripara block, Dumka, is located in the interiors of the state of Jharkhand and so government facilities including the Public Distribution System (PDS) were highly irregular. The families of this community depend mainly on subsidized food items like rice and oil which they were unable to access thus their food security was at a significant risk. These families also used kerosene oil to fuel their light source as these communities were not yet electrified, which could have been bought at a subsidized price if the PDS was functioning properly. This fate is shared by the surrounding four communities as well.

Through the facilitation of Ms Anita Tudu, LWSIT Personnel as well as Secretary of the *MahilaSabhaSayangSahayakSamuha (SSS)* i.e. the local Self Help Group, a mass meeting was conducted for the four communities adopted by LWSIT. It was decided that the Block Development Officer (BDO) would be approached with their complaints against the rationing system and its lapses. The application was submitted to the BDO and after several rounds of meetings and discussions, followed by a visit from the Block level Extension Officer for verification of the actual situation. The PDS license for the area was finally granted to the *MahilaSabha SSS* in 2014. At present, the PDS is functioning efficiently benefitting the people of all four communities through provision of food and non-food items at affordable prices. Apart from kerosene oil and rice, they are also receiving sugar, wheat and clothes through the ration shop. This is an example of how collective action can lead to realization of rights of affected persons and bring about lasting change.



Chief Guest, Mr Gopal Chandra Mohapatra, Assistant Director, Meteorological Department, addresses a group of women on Human Rights Day



Human Rights Day programme being observed in Kendrapada with Chief Guest, Mr Ajay Samal, Principal of Tulasi Women's College, Kendrapada



Members of the Mahila Sabha SSS at work distributing food items under the PDS



Members of the Mahila Sabha SSS engaged in registering the community members under PDS