

## E-Newsletter

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*Lutheran World Service India Trust* is a Christian, ecumenical organization promoted jointly by the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India and the National Council of Churches in India.

Registered formally in 2008, the organization began work as the India program arm of Lutheran World Federation/ Department of World Service in 1974 offering relief services to the refugees of the 1971 Bangladesh War of Independence.

The organization works on issues of Sustainable Livelihoods, Community Resilience, Education and Health with Gender and Peace as cross-cutting themes. It's development work is concentrated in the states of Assam, West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand, while it responds to disasters on a pan-India basis.

## INSIDE STORIES

### Happy Women's Day



## PROJECT UPDATES



This year's theme for the International Day, **“Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world”** celebrates the tremendous efforts by women and girls around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and highlight the gap that remains. It is also aligned with the priority theme of the 65<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women, **“Women in public life, equal participation in decision making”** and the flagship Generation Equality campaign, which calls for women's right to decision-making in all areas of life, equal pay, equal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work, an end to all forms of violence against women and girls, and health-care services that respond to their needs. Women are also at the forefront of the battle against COVID-19, as front-line and health sector workers, as scientists, doctors and caregivers, yet they get paid 11% less globally than their male counterparts.

## STEER Balangir Unit:

The IWD 2021 was observed by STEER Project, Balangir Unit with good participation from SHG and CBO leaders as well as members from Panchayat Samiti Vice-Chairmen, AWW, ASHA, Mahasangh Leaders and members from 20 communities. The program was organized and included a Street Rally with banners and posters, Musical Chair, Mathia phata and Jhota competition, etc. with active participation from women and adolescent girls. Focus was given on the protection of women's rights and available legal instruments for them. The program was very much contextual as this year's Theme of the IWD: **“Women in Leadership, Achieving an Equal Future in a COVID-19 world”**



## STEER Bankura Unit:

The STEER Project, Bankura Unit celebrated the IWD in operational communities, where 67 people from 9 communities attended the program. The primary objective of IWD observation was shared by LWSIT Staff and other Guests to the participants particularly focusing on the importance of Women's Day, role of a woman in the family & society, reduction of gender discrimination and zero tolerance to gender based violence.



## STEER Kalahandi Unit:

IWD was observed on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at Boraguda village under Dundelmal Gram Panchayat of Kalahandi district, Odisha. There were 97 participants who participated in the program from 12 Communities. President and ICDS Worker attended the program and addressed the participants and focused on various issues related to women and gender discriminations which happen in society. All the Guest Speakers emphasized on the need for women groups to be united and act as change agents for the betterment of society, so that violence against women can be reduced and women can get due justice.



## STEER Kendrapada Unit:

Several programs were organized by STEER Project, Kendrapada to observe the IWD 2021 with the strong involvement and participation of the Village Development Committee (Gram Unnayan Committee) members. Participants from more than 15 communities enthusiastically joined particularly the women and adolescent girls. Some of the distinguished dignitaries who attended as Guest Speakers include the Panchayat Samiti Member, PRI Head (Sarapancha), Odisha Livelihood Mission representative, AWW & ASHA Workers, etc. Prior to the meeting held at Kalasree Gosahi community, all the participants got together to listen to the valuable messages from the guests, the participants went around with Street Rallies with slogans placards and banners with messages related to women empowerment, reduction of gender disparity, etc.







## STEER Project, Mayurbhanj Unit:

In the Mayurbhanj Unit of Odisha, the IWD was observed where community members attended the program with much enthusiasm and drive by maintaining COVID-19 Pandemic guidelines given by the Govt. People from different communities took part in the Program. Both women and men, girls and boys joined the Rallies initially holding banners and placards highlighting different captions shouting slogans on human rights especially relating to women & girls focusing discrimination between Women and Men, Girls and Boys as social crimes which are against Human Rights.

## GEP Kolkata Unit:

The International Women's Day (IWD) was celebrated on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 by GEP Kolkata Unit where women and other participants from operational communities attended with much enthusiasm and zeal. During this celebration, emphasis was given on the Theme of the IWD of this year i.e. "Choose to Challenge and Equal and Better Future for All". A total of 105 from 15 slum communities were present covering 31 CBOs/SHGs. The rights of the Domestic Workers and challenges they faced in the workplace to earn their livelihood, was discussed. The need for equal opportunities and income for women was also shared by the resource persons. Group members presented the Role Play on Gender Based Violence (GBV) faced by the other gender (TG) beside the binary gender.





## GEP Bhubaneswar Unit:

The IWD observed in GEP Bhubaneswar Unit with the involvement of WAVAW Club Members. A total of 175 Women participated in the program, wherein street rally, slogans with placard on women rights, action against prevailing practices of gender discrimination and GBV was emphasized.



## DSSQC Project, Birbhum Unit

On the occasion of IWD 2021, women members of SHGs/ CBOs of respective communities under three zones of DSSQC Birbhum Unit took initiatives to organize the programs at three different locations. Not only members from operational communities attended the program, but the women from nearby communities also participated in the programs. Total 276 participants from 21 SHGs, 6 FIGs of 18 communities attended the programs, in which the LWSIT Staff coordinated the programs with direct involvement of the community people.

## CAP-R Project, Assam Unit:

CAP-R Assam Unit observed IWD in all the Zones where Women, Men and Children attended the program with much spirit and enthusiasm. Around 500 people attended the programs as organized at different locations covering most of the operational communities in Kokrajhar and Chirang districts of Assam. SHGs, Village Headmen, VDCs, Peace Committees and Youth Groups took part in the program.





# LWSIT STAFF RETREAT - 2021

STAFF  
RETREAT



The Staff Retreat program was organized at National Office level in Haldia, West Bengal. All the Staff of National Office, Project Coordinators and one person from each project as second line leaders (considering gender balance) from all the nine Project Units of LWSIT. Total 28 participants attended the Staff Retreat Program. The LWSIT Board President – Bishop Johan Dang inaugurated the program along with the opening prayer and gave his message from the Board of Trustees. The AED of LWSIT, Mr Kishore Kumar Nag, did the welcome and opening message on the Staff Retreat to the participants. Besides, there were three Resource Persons from different backgrounds who facilitated the program: Mr. Shibsankar Sanyal (Financial Consultant) gave a reflection on the FCRA (Amendment) Act 2020; Rev. Joel Patrick who enlightened the participants on how to live in Peace and Harmony in the post COVID-19 Pandemic situation and Ms. Sukanya Kar (Gender Consultant) who gave a reflection on the Gender and Human Rights perspective. The Retreat Program was held for three days from 11<sup>th</sup> March till 13<sup>th</sup> March 2021. The expenses towards the Staff Retreat Program held at Haldia as well as three other follow up staff retreat programs organized in Assam, Birbhum and Bhubaneswar were supported by Normisjon. All the four events organized on different dates were held in March 2021 and was very effective and a learning experience for the participants.





In continuation of the staff Retreat held for the National Office during 11th to 13th March 2021 in Haldia a follow up program for a Staff Retreat 2021 was organized for all the staff members of LWSIT Assam unit on 23rd and 24th March 2021. The Resource Persons were Mr. B.N Biswal and Mr. Santosh Das, both senior staff of LWSIT from National Office Kolkata, attended and facilitated the program. Rt. Rev. Sulen Narzary, Bishop Emeritus, BD & Chairman, Project Central Committee (CAP-R Project) were also invited as a guest for the program.



The Staff Retreat follow up program was organized in Birbhum Unit for the staff of DSSQC Birbhum Unit, STEER Bankura Unit and GEP Kolkata Unit for those staff who could not attend the Staff Retreat program organized at National Office level. Similarly, the staff retreat follow up program was also organized in Bhubaneswar for the staff of GEP Bhubaneswar, STEER – Kendrapada, Balangir and Kalahandi Units for those who did not attend the staff retreat program at the National Office level. There were 14 staff of West Bengal Units and 15 staff from Odisha based project Units who attended the program which was organized in Suri, Birbhum district and Bhubaneswar respectively. This program was organized as part of the staff capacity building and providing the opportunities to understand the LWSIT Strategic Plan, Program Documents (PD) of three concerned projects and they also reviewed major Policies of LWSIT. The program was organized for two days i.e., 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> March and 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> March 2021 respectively.



## MASSIVE FIRE INCIDENT IN KOLKATA

On the evening of 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021, a major fire broke out in one of LWSIT's operational areas i.e., Baghbazar Community in Kolkata City. There was no such casualty of human death but the blaze engulfed entire communities where the houses of 142 families totally burnt out and turned into ashes. Apart from houses, these families lost their household assets, cooking utensils, important documents, books, note books, clothes, jewellery and money what they had saved from their meagre earnings.



Considering the extent of damage caused due to the fire incident, LWSIT with financial support from ELCA, provided various kinds of relief assistance and stood with the people as they needed external help. The Humanitarian assistance was provided to the affected families of Baghbazar community as soon as LWSIT received resources followed by a procurement process of various relief materials as per the need identified during the rapid assessment. There were 142 families with total population of 645 persons (Female – 318 and Male – 327) who benefitted through the relief assistance provided by LWSIT. After a rapid assessment through household surveys was done (identifying the needs, selection of relief materials, garments for each family member, etc.,) the entire relief distribution program was conducted.

*Mrs. Sarala Patra said that, "the day when our Basti (slum) burned down due to the fire incident, we were in a lot of tension of how to start a new way of life! But, LWSIT has fulfilled our every need and the staff are very supportive. Now we are happy and assured for food and other materials until we are getting our homes rebuilt. I pray to God's Blessings for LWSIT and peace exists for all the supporters and to this organisation, so that they can reach more such poor and needy people in the society".*



*Some of the CBO members expressed that, "Due to the fire incident, we lost everything at home, we are blessed that LWSIT stood with us during our difficult situation and as per the needs they have provided us the necessary relief materials for which we are grateful to them"*





During the year 2020, LWSIT distributed relief materials to 500 flood affected families covering 2,237 individuals by providing them Food Materials, Non-Food Items (NFI) and WASH/Hygiene Kits to cope with the situation and recover to normalcy. Besides, during the first quarter of 2021, project staff had conducted community meetings and shared the goal and objectives of this Transboundary Flood Resilience (TFR) project in Assam. The involvement of LWF Nepal, RDRS Bangladesh and role of LWSIT was also discussed in these preliminary meetings with people of 10 Communities where this project is implemented. While the need for community based disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction was discussed, the importance of enhancing the capacity building of youth and community leaders also received importance. Setting up an Early Warning System and effective communication through mobile networks to receive flood related information also received priority during community meetings. Introduction of climate resilience seeds for agriculture was also assisted to revitalize the cropping practices.







## STEER Project, Balangir Unit:

The one day exposure visit was conducted at SVA (Sahabhagi Vikash Abhiyan) Bilenjore, Komna Block of Nuapada District. The participants of 15 women & 07 men from 16 communities of 09 villages attended the program on 20.03.2021. The objective of the program was to enhance and diversify livelihood skills in farm and non-farm sectors of the Right holders. There was interaction with the farmers about vermin compost and nursery of fruit plants & social forestry plants, after which there was some orientation of FPO (Farmers producers Organization), cooperative/Registration, on farm & non- farm sector, vermin compost & mushroom farming.



## STEER Project, Bankura Unit:

On 30<sup>th</sup> March, 29 people from 7 communities & 9 SHGs went for an exposure visit at Shamayita Math, Amarkanank Bankura. After the explanation about Green House & nursery, they learnt how to make seedlings. After that they visited the dairy farms, Vermicompost pit, Mango saplings. They also learnt the different kinds of cow species & how much milk a cow could give per day. For instance, the kind of cow which is cross breed gives an average of 10 litres of milk per day. They were encouraged to earn money by dairy farming. They also went on to learn about Hyderabad Nippier grass, and about turmeric & zinger cultivation, after which they were shown sunflower cultivation, soil testing and mushroom cultivation.



### STEER Project, Kendrapada Unit:

One exposure visit was held at the project level with community active members to gain knowledge and making of reliance items. Total 16 participants were nominated from 10 communities, interest to do something had expressed much idifferent from others so the plan was chalked out accordingly, which was a good learning experience. It will help implement the Income generation activities.



### STEER Project, Mayurbhanj Unit:

With an objective to get the interested Community members exposed to the new feasible technologies both on-farm and off-farm most suited to the geo-climatic conditions as the gainful engagement options through better production & income for improvement in life qualities, an Exposure Program was organized on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021. What the participants have seen/ observed during the exposure visit to KVK include; Herbal Garden, Commercial Vegetable farm, Mushroom Farm, Nursery raising, Horticulture, Vermin Compost, Fish farming in artificial tanks, Improved Poultry and Apiary. They further highlighted their concern to take up avenues like Mushroom farming and Poultry with the specific varieties initially.



## FROM JANUARY TO MARCH 2021

- ❖ On 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 Zoom meeting attended by AED and Manager – Emergency and Program Development with Rotary International Literacy Mission related to Asha Kiran Project implementation by LWSIT in Jharkhand.
- ❖ On 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021, AED, Senior Staff of National Office and Project staff of Bankura Unit attended the meeting held at National Office Kolkata related to WBSCL Training on Tailoring and Batik Printing for smooth program implementation
- ❖ AED, Senior Staff and Program Coordinators of National Office attended the online meeting with Act Church of Sweden for continuation of next phase PD of GEP & STEER projects i.e. 2021 to 2023.
- ❖ On 4<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021 – AED attended Online meeting related to Global Consultation organized by Digni, Norway.
- ❖ On 9<sup>th</sup> Feb and 16<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021 – AED, Senior Management and Program Coordinators attended the Briefing and Debriefing of External mid-term Evaluation for DSSQC project with evaluators
- ❖ Executive Secretary of UELCI & his colleagues along with NELC Moderator visited Assam Unit Office of LWSIT on 15<sup>th</sup> Feb (AED Coordinated with Assam Unit)
- ❖ AED and Senior Staff of LWSIT National Office attended the GEP External Evaluation briefing meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> February and Debriefing meeting on 23 Feb 2021 with Evaluation
- ❖ AED attended the online extra-ordinary emergency LWSIT Board meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb
- ❖ On 25<sup>th</sup> Feb, Briefing meeting on STEER Project external evaluation and on 8<sup>th</sup> March debriefing meeting of the same project was attended by AED, Senior Management and Program Coordinators with Evaluators
- ❖ Manager – Emergency and Program Development attended the ACT Alliance meeting on Shrinking Space of Civil Society which was organized by ACT Secretariat on 25<sup>th</sup> Feb
- ❖ Relief distribution program to the fire affected people of Baghbazar, Kolkata held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021, wherein AED and Emergency Manager attended the program held at Ultadanga Campus of Kolkata Unit
- ❖ Staff Retreat Program – All the staff of National Office, Project Coordinators of all Units and one more staff from each Unit attended the program organized at Haldia from 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> March 2021. The New President inaugurated the program on first day of the program (11<sup>th</sup> March 2021)
- ❖ Follow up Staff Retreat Programs were organized in Assam, Birbhum and Bhubaneswar Units in March 2021, where all the Units Staff participated in these programs those have not attended the national level program.
- ❖ On 28<sup>th</sup> March 2021, AED and Program Coordinator of GEP conducted the orientation to new Project Coordinator of GEP Bhubaneswar Unit and staff meeting for GEP Bhubaneswar Unit being conducted
- ❖ Trans-boundary Flood Resilience Project webinar meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> March involving LWSIT India, RDRS Bangladesh & LWF Nepal attended by AED along with Emergency Manager. In this meeting, ELCA representatives from Chicago Office and Consulting Regional Representative for South/ South Asia
- ❖ AED attended the online meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> March with ELCA related to LWSIT Bank Account matters and he also attended the CHS Global Alliance General Assembly online meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> March
- ❖ AED attended meetings with the President, Vice President and some of the Board members in Chennai, Pondicherry and Ranchi in the month of March 2021



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