

STORIES OF A HAPPIER CHILDHOOD

ADDRESSING CHILD LABOUR
IN INDIA'S MICA MINING AREAS

terre des hommes
stops child exploitation



STORIES OF A HAPPIER CHILDHOOD

ADDRESSING CHILD LABOUR IN MICA MINING AREAS

terre des hommes 
stops child exploitation



CONTENTS

- 2 About the Project
- 3 Story 1 - Light at the end of the tunnel
- 9 Story 2 - These goats are loved
- 11 Story 3 - Seema gets support
- 15 Story 4 - Empower a woman to empower a village
- 21 Story 5 - The sweet taste of victory
- 27 Story 6 - Libraries amidst jungles
- 29 Story 7 - Remedial learning during COVID
- 31 Story 8 - Sabuta supported
- 33 Story 10 - Bal Manch to the rescue
- 35 Story 11 - India: Bringing Digital Education to Children from Mica Dependant Districts
- 39 Story 13 - My Bicycle is my Best Friend
- 41 Story 14 - Learning doesn't stop in Mica Dependent Districts
- 43 Story 15 - A Child Marriage is prevented
- 45 Story 16 - Lalita leads the way
- 49 Story 17 - Once a leader always a leader

ABOUT THE MICA PROJECT

The Mica Project by Terre des Hommes Netherlands works in districts of Koderma and Giridih in Jharkhand, addressing child labour in the region. Children work as a result of abject poverty due to low wages from extreme dependence on Mica mining. Children are brought out of exploitation through access to quality education, increase in family income through additional income generation activities, child participation through children's clubs, access to social security and strengthening of child protection mechanisms.



STORY I

LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL



To be a child is to be free. Childhood is where joy and wonder is; a time to be cherished, a time to be glee.

Sadly, childhood is also a privilege.

10-year-old Vipin* Kumar's growing years were spent plunging into dark pits in Mica mines so that he could help provide for his family.

"Going into the pit was scary. It was dark. Huge rocks above could fall on me anytime", says Vipin, with a strained fear in his eyes.

The state of Jharkhand in India accounts for 25% of the world's Mica demand. Districts Koderma and Giridih supply a majority of this Mica. An unorganised sector, the Mica scrap or dhibra collection is a testimony to labour exploitation, claspng families into poverty. Lack of additional employment opportunities in the region makes families extremely dependent on mica for their livelihood. To sustain themselves, families have no other choice but to involve their children in collecting mica scraps.

Vipin Kumar belonged to one such family. "I used to be in the mines from 9 am to 6 pm", he says. "My mother and father would join me. I used to go into the pit, take out the Mica, carry it up on my head, and later, separate it by hand. It was very hot and my hands would hurt", he added.



Going into the pit was scary. It was dark. Huge rocks above could fall on me anytime.



The Mica mines Vipin used to work in from dawn to dusk. Remote villages in Koderma and Giridih are filled with these mines.

Vipin would get Rs.10 for every kg of Mica scrap (dhibra) when sold in the local market. "I would earn Rs.50 a day", he said. "With that money, my mother used to buy rice."

Such was Vipin Kumar's early childhood; victimised by brutal circumstances and trapped in a rut.

But there was light at the end of this tunnel!

In 2018, we instituted a project on Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Mica mines across vulnerable regions of Koderma and Giridih. The project formed vulnerable children into clubs, training them on child rights, the importance of education, and how to facilitate change in their community. This group of children soon began to approach parents whose children used to work.

"The Children's club or Bal Manch came to our house and spoke to my parents. They told them not to send me to work and explained to them how my education would one day take us out of poverty", said Vipin Kumar.

After repeated counselling, Vipin's parents sent him to school. "I don't go to the mines anymore. My day begins with me going to school. I really enjoy it. I learn through so many interesting materials and I also get to play football", says Vipin Kumar with a smile.



The Children's Club or 'Bal Manch' came to our house and spoke to my parents. They told them not to send me to work and explained to them how my education would one day take us out of poverty.

Vipin playing with his friends in his school playground. We have also provided sports material for children in schools.



We work towards ensuring access to quality education in Government schools by providing interactive materials for more hands-on activity-based learning, along with sports materials to encourage play. The objective of these interventions is to ensure that children remain joyfully engaged in their education. This reduces the risk of them dropping out and going back to mines.

“Children should not pick dhibra”, says Vipin Kumar. “They should go to school. School makes me feel good.”, he adds.

Although Vipin’s parents still engage in Mica scrap collection, they have gradually begun venturing into agriculture. Vipin’s happiness after education has motivated them to strive for additional sources of income. A nascent spark has replaced the gloom in Vipin’s eyes. He now looks forward to each day as he prances his way to school, dreaming about his next goal.

“I want to be a doctor when I grow up”, he says.



I don't go to the mines anymore. My day begins with going to school. I really enjoy it.



STORY 2

THESE GOATS ARE LOVED!

“This is Charki Bakri and that is Goli Bakri”, said Sunita Devi as she spoke about her goats. “I love them very much”, she added.

Sunita Devi lives in the Mica belt of Jharkhand, India, where low wages from extreme dependence on mica collection places families in abject poverty. The result of this is that children are forced to work in the mines. They don't get to go to schools and their childhood is lost.

To address this issue, one of our activities is to provide families with additional means of livelihood so that children don't have to work. With the additional income, the families can also provide better for their children's health and education.

Sunita Devi is one such beneficiary who was given Rs.5000 during the pandemic. She invested that money in the rearing of goats and presently earns a good income. “I was given training on how to rear my goats. They both are now healthy and one of them has given birth to a baby too!”, she adds. “They mean so much to our family because they are the ones feeding us and helping educate my children.”

Sunita's children presently go to school, and she is also able to afford their private tuition fee. Sunita is one of many parents that our project has supported towards ensuring economic development.



These goats mean so much to us. they are the ones feeding us and helping educate my children.

STORY 3

SEEMA GETS SUPPORT



Seema Kumari is a 13-year-old who lives in Koderma, a Mica dependent district in Jharkhand, India. These communities rely on mica mining as a source of income and families often involve their children to support in the process.

During COVID-19, Seema faced challenges, “I was very excited to be promoted to 9th standard after scoring good marks in my exams which were just before the imposition of the lockdown. My school is 7 kilometres away from the village. Both my parents are physically challenged and my mother works as support staff at the Anganwadi centre. My parents were very happy to see my progress in my studies, and they promised me that they would provide me with a bicycle to go to school.”

Seema added, “But the COVID-19 lockdown badly hampered the economic state of my family and my parents were not even able to afford study materials. I was very concerned about the continuation of my studies.”

Seema was soon at risk of child exploitation, both child labour and child marriage waiting like a storm to hit her life.

However, she was able to overcome this.

“The Balmanch (Children’s Club formed by Terre des Hommes Netherlands) helped me receive a bicycle and study materials with the support of the Mica project. I am pursuing group studies and have been using my bicycle to attend online academic



I was very excited to be promoted to 9th standard after scoring good marks in my exams which were just before the imposition of the lockdown.



Seema wants to pursue higher studies and bring pride to the entire family.

learning sessions organised in neighbouring communities (as my parents cannot afford a smartphone) and attending private tuition. I am very thankful to TDH-NL for the support and for helping me to continue my studies”

Sanjay Pandit and Bimla Devi (parents of Seema Kumari) acknowledge the timely support of TDH-NL for their child as they have high hopes for their daughter.



I am very thankful to TDH NL for the support and for helping me to continue my studies.



STORY 4

EMPOWER A WOMAN TO
EMPOWER A VILLAGE

Women have always spearheaded well being in society. It is they who wake up at the crack of dawn and tend to the needs of their family. Therefore, their empowerment plays a crucial role in the overall development of the family.

Such is the case of Harina Devi, a resident of Giridih district, Jharkhand, India.

Harina Devi is a mother of three children. Belonging to a district dependent on Mica collection for its livelihood, Harina Devi and her entire family used to work in Mica mines.

An unorganised sector, the Mica scrap or dhibra collection is a testimony to labour exploitation, clasping families into poverty. Lack of additional employment opportunities in the region makes families extremely dependent on mica for their livelihood. To sustain themselves, families have no other choice but to involve their children in collecting mica scraps.

“I used to pick dhibra along with my children. I would take my 3 children and go into a 10 feet deep pit.”, she says. “I couldn’t feed them properly and couldn’t send them to school. It was horrible.”

Today, Harina Devi sends her three children to school. She makes a much higher income than she used to before, and is also the leader of a local Self Help Group.



I used to pick dhibra along with my children. I would take my 3 children and go into a 10 feet deep pit.

Harina Devi is a mother of three children. Belonging to a district dependent on Mica collection for its livelihood, Harina Devi and her entire family used to work in Mica mines.



In 2018, we intervened in Harina Devi's life as part of our project across districts of Koderma and Giridih. With a multi-pronged approach to eliminating child labour, the project engages with all key stakeholders, one of them being parents. By increasing the economic capacity of parents, the project aims to make them send their children to school.

"I was given INR.10,000 to invest in an additional source of livelihood. I decided to strengthen my agriculture activities", says Harina Devi. "With the INR 10,000 I got, I spent INR 8,000 on ploughing, purchase of seeds, fertilisers, labour work for sowing seeds and remaining INR 2,000 used for intercultural operations till the maturity of crops".

Harina cultivates dal, corn, potatoes and onions and is diversifying into other vegetables. "After selling my produce, I profited by Rs.10,000 over a period of 8 months from the agriculture season. With this additional money, I'm able to feed my children better and provide well for their education. I have also managed to return INR 4,000 borrowed from the Self Help Group".The money returned by Harina Devi to her Self Help Group is being used for other families to strengthen their additional sources of livelihoods for similar purposes.

Harina has been very keen that her three children not only go to school but also learn well through private tuition.



I was given
INR.10,000 to invest
in an additional
source of
livelihood. I decided
to strengthen my
agriculture
activities.



Harina leads her village local Self Help Group of 25 women, called Deep Jagran (Awakening). It was set up by the project and she was made the head of the group.

For Harini Devi, her duty doesn't stop with her family.

"I lead our village's local Self Help Group, called Deep Jagran (Awakening). It was set up by TdH-NL and I was made the head of the group. We are 25 women and each of us works together to ensure that benefits of the support received from TdH-NL are circulated among members of the group, thereby contributing to our collective well being", she says.

The money deposited is a revolving fund among the women which they utilise in times of need.

"Each of these women were also given Rs.10,000 for additional income generation in different stages. The group sat together and decided which woman can do what activity. Some of us do agriculture, some of us have invested in goats, some make bamboo baskets and some engage in tailoring. We have all earned profits and made more than what we did while collecting mica", she says with confidence.

The group meets on the 10th of every month and Harina chairs every meeting. Apart from providing monetary assistance, the SHG also helps solve social issues in the village.

"We were told about eradicating child labour and child marriage. In our communities, girls get married very early. Now we spread awareness among families to stop child marriage. We also assist member women with their family problems", says Harina Devi.



We spread awareness among families to stop child marriage. We also assist member women with their family problems.

STORY 5

THE SWEET TASTE
OF VICTORY



Eleven-year-old Pooja* sits cross-legged on the ground looking intently at a carrom board. She adjusts her crisp looking school uniform to get a better look at her target. She aims, hits and scores. Everyone cheers. School is such a great place to be.

"I love being in school", says Pooja, a resident of Giridih district in Jharkhand, India. "I get food to eat, materials to play with and I also get to learn", she adds. This was possible in Pooja's life only since 2019. Prior to that, her life was spent picking mica scraps from deep, dark pits.

"Mica comes in red, white and black", she says matter-of-factly. "It is first taken from a pit. Then it needs to be separated from the mud by hand. It is graded, split and cut", she adds.

Pooja is very well versed in the processing of this minor mineral. Sadly, this knowledge did not come from school, but from actually being involved in the process.

"To collect mica, I had to be in a pit from 8 am to 4 pm every day. It was completely dark. I used to climb down a ladder", says Pooja. "It was scary because rocks could fall on me anytime."

Pooja comes from a family of five; her mother, father and her two siblings.



To collect mica, I had to be in a pit from 8 am to 4 pm every day. It was completely dark. I used to climb down a ladder.



Pooja in school playing an indoor sport. The project has also supported schools with sport material for children

The entire family would walk in the scorching heat to the mines closeby and begin their mica collection for the day.

“I wanted to study. I like to learn. But I had no choice”, says Pooja.

Our project follows a multipronged approach to eradicate child labour in the region, involving all key stakeholders. With respect to girls, the project also ensures the eradication of child marriage and promotes girl child education. Children being the primary stakeholders are involved in their own development process through the facilitation of Children’s Clubs or Bal Manch, where they are trained on child rights, the importance of education and how to be agents of change in their community.

“Towards the end of 2018, the Bal Manch people came home and spoke to my parents about sending me to school. Although my parents needed money, they were counselled that not going to the mines and going to school would help us come out of poverty. After a few sessions, they agreed to send me to school”, says Pooja, extremely thankful to the Children’s Club.

Today Pooja is a happier child. She wakes up each morning looking forward to going to school and relieved that she doesn't have to go mica picking.



I wanted to study. I
like to learn. But I
had no choice.



• Pooja wakes up each morning looking forward to go to school and relieved that she doesn't have to go mica picking.

"Now, my family spends less time in mica collection. They received Rs.10,000 which they used to invest in agriculture. Their earnings are much more now than before", she says talking about the additional Income Generation Activity support given to families to overcome their dependence on mica.

Pooja's life has seen tremendous transformation in the span of a year. From being a victim of circumstances, she is now in charge of her life and is confident that she will emerge victoriously.

"I love being in school. I get food to eat, materials to play with and I also get to learn", she says.

**Name changed to protect identity*



I love being in school. I get food to eat, materials to play with and I also get to learn.

A young boy with dark hair and a bright smile is sitting cross-legged on a patterned mat on the floor. He is wearing a vibrant yellow long-sleeved shirt with a tropical print and dark trousers. He is holding an open book and looking towards the camera. The room is rustic, with a wooden shelf behind him holding various colorful items like a blue vase, a pink decorative object, and a green box. A yellow cabinet is visible in the background. The lighting is warm and focused on the boy.

STORY 6

LIBRARIES AMIDST JUNGLES

“My village is near a jungle area. There is no network here, no newspapers, so we do not get to know anything about the outside world”, said Ramu* from a village in India where mica mining and child labour have been present for many years. Without access to information and education, opportunities for children from poor families are limited and often lead to them supporting their parents’ work.

The Mica Project helped set up libraries in Ramu’s village with books that covered General Knowledge, Basic English, short stories, and others for children to know the world better. The project works towards addressing child labour in the mica dependent districts of Koderma and Giridih in the state of Jharkhand, India. Access to quality education is one of the main components of the project to take children out of their exploitative situations.

“After coming to the library, I have developed a liking for general knowledge”, said Ramu. “I get to learn different things in the world, which I didn’t even know of otherwise. I recently learnt about all the Prime Ministers of India”, he added.

These libraries were set up for children during the pandemic to keep them productively engaged.

“After reading these books, I feel like being a Police Officer. I want to work for the Government and bring change”, said Ramu.

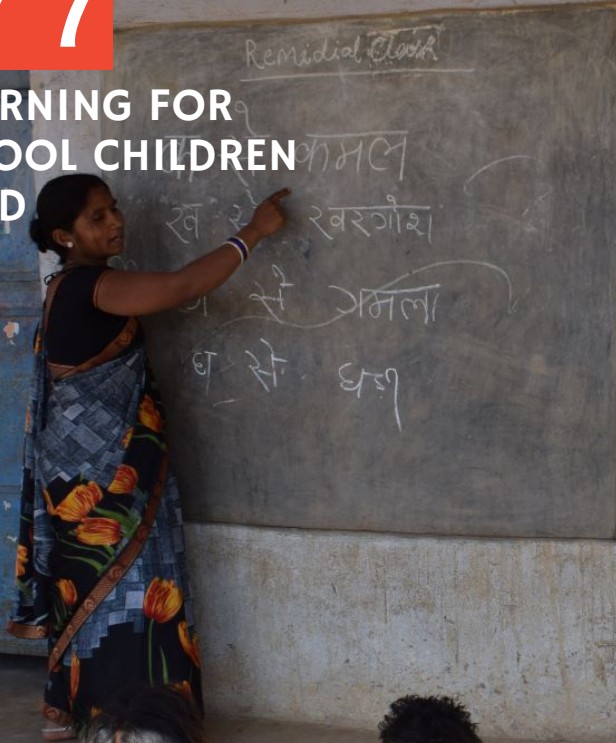
**Name changed to protect identity*



My village is near a jungle. This is no network here, no newspapers, so we don't know anything about the outside world. The libraries have helped us.

STORY 7

REMEDIAL LEARNING FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN DURING COVID



During COVID, children belonging to villages in Mica dependent districts of Koderma and Giridih in Jharkhand couldn't attend school regularly as their parents lost their livelihood and couldn't support their education. Furthermore, they were made to support their parents in household work and income generation during the pandemic.

While working towards re-enrolling these children in schools, we realised that the children had a gap of 6 months to a year in their studies.

As a response, we conducted remedial classes to bridge this gap in academic learning for these dropout students, specifically belonging to pre-primary and primary classes. These classes were conducted following appropriate COVID protocol.

Many children were provided with lessons on basic reading and writing. They were also supported through digital classes and given access to mobile library facilities to keep them enthusiastically engaged and continue the revision of the studies that they missed out on.

A total of 85 children in ten villages were enrolled in these remedial classes. Now, these dropout students can smoothly transition to the next grade despite the pandemic.



Remedial classes bridge this gap in academic learning for dropout students, specifically belonging to pre-primary and primary classes.

STORY 8

SABUTA SUPPORTED



“My family is fully dependent on income from Mica. During the lockdown, our survival was tough and my education was at risk. The tension was even more for me due to my upcoming secondary board exams”, says 15-year-old Sabuta living in a Mica dependent district in Jharkhand, where children are vulnerable to child labour.

Finishing class 10 for children in this region would be more than a milestone for them and their village.

During COVID, when schools shut down, we gave Sabuta guide books and access to recorded online academic sessions through digital learning facilities in her village.

“These books and online education helped me and other class 10 students. I was also given a bicycle. With this, I could go to peer group learning centres where class 10 concepts were taught. I was able to prepare very well for my exams, despite the time of crisis. I’m no more tense, but confident that I’ll pass my board exams with flying colours.”, she says

Sabuta’s family also received ration support during the lockdown which helped them survive.



These books and online education helped me and other class 10 students. I’m no more tense, but confident that I’ll pass my board exams with flying colours.

BAL MANCH TO
THE RESCUE

STORY 9



A Bal Manch or a Children's Club is a forum that brings children together to solve community issues, enabling them to be agents of change.

As part of the Mica project, these Children's Clubs were formed for sensitisation and problem-solving purposes, enabling children to lead their development. This bore fruit during the COVID pandemic.

In the village of Bekobar, Koderma, members of the Balmanch spread awareness among people during the lockdown. They also suggested various ways to prevent Coronavirus, viz., washing hands with soap for 20 seconds at regular intervals, and using sanitisers and masks on a regular basis.

The children of the Bekobar Balmanch also ensured ways to practice social distancing in their village. They visited grocery stores, vegetable markets, social gathering spots and marked social distancing signs for people to adhere to.

Apart from awareness and social distancing measures, these children also got together (following social distancing, and preventive mechanisms), pooled in grocery and food items from more economically stable households, and distributed them for those families in need.



Children found ways to ensure social distancing in frequented areas of the village.



STORY 10

DIGITAL LEARNING
IN COVID TIMES

While the world gets accustomed to a new normal, where the use of digital platforms soar, areas plunged in poverty with primitive means of functioning find it harder to make way in these troubled times.

Sapna Devi belongs to a similar remote village in the Giridih district of Jharkhand in India.

“After the lockdown, all schools were shut. I was scared that I would not be able to write my board exam and clear my secondary education.”, said Sapna Devi*.

For Sapna Devi, clearing her secondary examination is more than a milestone. It's a sign of empowerment, and of victory against exploitation. Sapna resides in the Mica dependent district of Giridih, where children engage in the process of mica scrap collection to help provide for their families as a result of abject poverty and vulnerability in the region.

Sapna was one among the 16,573 vulnerable and exploited children to receive access to quality education.

Lack of access to education during the COVID-19 pandemic instilled fear in Sapna who saw child labour as a looming threat. The remoteness of her region made it more difficult for her to know how to access education digitally.



Lack of access to education during the COVID-19 pandemic instilled fear in Sapna who saw child labour as a looming threat.



Sapna devi and her friends were provided us with downloaded videos from the Government's Digi Sath initiative towards digital education during COVID-19.

As part of the COVID-19 response, efforts were taken by us in Koderma and Giridih districts to ensure rehabilitation in education.

“The project staff provided us with downloaded videos from the Government’s Digi-SATH initiative towards digital education during COVID-19. These videos were shared with us or our parents on WhatsApp. Keeping our remoteness in mind, without guidance, I wouldn’t have known about Digi-SATH and how to access it”, said Sapna Devi.

Digi SATH is a State Government platform that creates and shares videos on various school subjects for children across different classes. Content from Digi-Sath is well suited to the learning needs of children in vulnerable regions of Koderma and Giridih.

Apart from linking children to Digi Sath, TdH-NL also facilitated online discussions through Zoom, where children could interact with teachers and classmates to understand the lessons better.

“Thanks to these videos, I feel a lot more confident about clearing my secondary education exam.”, said Sapna Devi.



Thanks to these videos, I feel a lot more confident about clearing my secondary education exam



STORY II

MY BICYCLE IS MY BEST FRIEND

Fourteen-year-old Pranita Kumari* loves going to school but what she loves more is the shiny red bicycle that takes her there.

“I got my bicycle when I was thirteen years old”, she said. “I love it because it is the reason why I am able to go to school, the reason I am able to dream of a great life. It is my best friend.”

Pranita belongs to a district where the dependence on mica is huge. As a result of poverty and exploitation in the supply chain, children are forced to join adults in mica mining, thereby stripping them off their childhood. Apart from this, the remoteness of these villages made it difficult for children to go to school.

“My school is very far away from home. Since I could not walk to school, I had stopped going. I used to join my parents in picking Mica scraps.”, she said. “It was scary. There were huge rocks.”

Through the project, we reached out to Pranita. She was provided with a bicycle which would help her go to school at ease.

“Thanks to the bicycle, I was re-enrolled in school when I was in class 6. I stopped going to the mica mines as my parents let me ride to school. They believed it was safe to travel. Now, I can be where I want to be.”, she said.



I love my cycle because it is the reason why I am able to go to school, the reason I am able to dream of a great life. It is my best friend.

The project is located in regions with a hilly terrain which makes it difficult for children to walk to school. The cycles have helped children get to school without hassle.





STORY 12

LITTLE LEARNERS

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a widespread crisis, affecting all walks of life. In this context, children's education has taken a mighty blow. This specifically holds true for pre-primary education where the child's early stage of growth is at stake.

To combat this, the project instituted 'Home Based Early Childhood Education' in Mica dependent districts, where children were taught pre-primary concepts of colour, shape, counting along with physical and motor development via household materials.

Vegetables became tools to teach colour, texture and shapes. Water bottles were painted with different colours, number charts were put up on curtains, and swings were made out of cloth.

"We were trained by the project staff on how to teach children through household materials. They directed us over the phone", says Kumar Devi, a mother of a four year old. "I thought my child would forget what he had learnt at the anganwadi. Now I'm happy that he can still continue to learn."

Children as young as five venture into the mines to collect mica scrap. Ensuring early childhood education through anganwadis helps prevent such trauma. But with the closure of anganwadis due to the pandemic, the children were again at risk. This home based method of pre-primary education stepped in to address this threat.



We were trained on how to teach children through household materials.



STORY 13

A CHILD MARRIAGE IS PREVENTED

Due to the pandemic, and the resulting closure of schools, children were at the risk of going back to a life of exploitation. Particularly among the girls, there was a high risk of them dropping out of school and getting married. Similar was the case of fourteen-year-old Mannu* (name changed), whose parents had fixed her marriage during the lockdown.

Belonging to a village nearby Mannu, the Children's Club members led by Amit identified that Mannu was to be wed during the lockdown. With Amit leading the front, the group went to Mannu's house and counselled her parents. Amit specifically mentioned to Mannu's mother and father that now was not the time for her to get married but to study. However, Mannu's parents weren't convinced and insisted on going ahead with the marriage.

Then Amit gathered members of the VLCPC (Village Level Child Protection Committee) and along with the field staff they visited Mannu's house. They warned her parents that they would call 1098 (Child Helpline) and report the issue post which they would have to face 1 year of imprisonment and have to pay a fine of Rs. 2 lakh. After this, Mannu's parents realised the gravity of this issue and decided to stop Mannu's wedding. They were also provided counselling on the importance of Mannu's education.

Now Mannu has been enrolled in school, and till the schools reopen post the pandemic, Mannu's number has been taken by the Children's Club and they send her syllabus oriented video material to learn from.



Children understand each other's problems. That's why it makes a huge difference if we work together and solve other children's issues.

A close-up portrait of a young woman with dark hair, wearing a red top, a gold necklace, and large floral earrings. She is looking slightly to the right with a neutral expression. The background is a blue-painted wooden door.

STORY 14

LALITA LEADS THE WAY

Lalita Kumari was the first girl in her village to pass her matriculation and continue her education. Girl child education is her main priority as part of being a Children's Club leader.

Lalita successfully ensured the enrollment of 12 girls who were found to be at extreme risk of child labour in mica mines. She counselled parents to send their daughters to schools and focused on spreading awareness on the significance of girl child education.

COVID-19 has created a potential risk of community infection, a huge sense of anxiety among children due to the lockdown and an influx of inward migrants. Continuation of the girl child's education has been a great matter of concern due to the closure of schools.

"I dream of pursuing higher studies and work for the betterment of education.", she said.

Apart from her work in ensuring girl child education, Lalita also worked towards ensuring the practice of safety measures to mitigate COVID-19.

She spread awareness on key hygiene and protection messages during COVID-19 through wall writing (18 sites) in her village. She coordinated access to online academic learning facilities at 3 sites in the village for the benefit of 32 children in 2 batches. She also helped create a safe environment for peer group learning.



Lalita successfully led ensured the enrollment of 12 girls who were at extreme risk of child labour



Lalita Kumari as a mentor was the guiding force in training children to follow key hygiene and safeguarding against COVID-19 infections.

Her efforts were appreciated when no one from the village was found infected due to COVID-19. The children were also able to continue their studies without facing trouble.

"I express my sincere thanks to the project for continued support and encouragement to all of us", she said.



Her efforts on
COVID awareness
were appreciated
when no one from
the village was
found infected

STORY 15

ONCE A LEADER ALWAYS
A LEADER



Venue: Hotel A

Date :10'

Devanad says, "I am very happy to lead my Balmanch members in providing access to learning during the pandemic. I am very happy that Balmanch children played a very significant role in ensuring access to online academic sessions for the benefit of seventy-two children. It is the Mica project that gave us the guidance."

The COVID-19 pandemic created a potential risk of community infection and a huge sense of anxiety among the children due to the closure of schools. Children were very concerned about their academics and reduced opportunities to share and learn with each other.

Devanand proactively facilitated consultations among Balmanch members in 6 smaller groups (with the participation of 5-6 members in each consultation) on a regular basis from May to October 2020 to discuss and arrive at how to reduce the risk of infection and ensure continuation of education. He also led intensive awareness through wall writings (10 sites) describing key hygiene and protection messages.

6 sites in the village were identified where 72 children could gather in small groups and access digital education through mobile phones. Each of the sites were coordinated by the Balmanch member leading his/her subgroup.



6 sites in the village were identified where 72 children could gather in small groups and access digital education.



Devanand proactively facilitated consultations among Balmanch members in 6 smaller groups to reduce the risk of infection and ensure the continuation of education.

Children studied in 10 small groups, with 7 to 8 children in each group. The project also supported the groups with study materials.

Devanand felt proud when no one from his village was found to be infected due to COVID-19. There was an increase in the level of awareness and practice of key safeguarding measures against the infection. All the school going children remained academically engaged.



Devanand felt proud as he could ensure peer group learning in the village.

ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

Terre des Hommes Netherlands is an international child protection organisation which prevents child exploitation, removes children from exploitative situations, and ensures they can develop themselves safely.

We implement projects at the grassroots with support our partners. We work directly with the children affected, their families and communities, train staff and government officials to advocate children's rights policies.

MICA PROJECT IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS



“because every story matters.

terre des hommes 
stops child exploitation

India Programme Office

Terre des Hommes Netherlands
28/2, Hutchins Main Road,
St. Thomas Town,
Bangalore - 560084, Karnataka, India
91- 91640 50000

www.tdh.nl