

DECEMBER 2020

ENDLINE EVALUATION REPORT

**‘Elimination of worst
forms of child labour
in the Mica mining
belt of Jharkhand,
India’**

Submitted by



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terre des hommes 
stops child exploitation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF The Mica Project India

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

TdH-NL implemented a project of 3 years duration “Elimination of worst forms of child labour (WFCL) in the Mica mining belt of Jharkhand, India”. The project had emerged on the basis of a finding of a study in 2016, that estimated 22,000 children working in the Mica collection in the states¹ of Jharkhand and Bihar in India. The project sought to address the root causes of the worst forms of child labour through prevention, rescue, improved child protection and rehabilitation through education of children and economic empowerment of children’s families in 42 villages in the districts of Koderma and Giridih districts of Jharkhand. The project was implemented in a consortium of 3 NGO partners with techno-managerial support from Tdh-NL.

The specific objectives of the project were as under:

- Children are empowered to address the issues of child protection in Mica mining areas.
- Parents, communities and institutional mechanisms support children’s access to education.
- Engage with the Jharkhand State Government to enforce relevant laws and improve access to relevant social welfare schemes.

At the end of the 3-year project cycle, an endline evaluation was commissioned to measure the project’s impact and assess its achievements against the targets in its life cycle of 3 years (2018-20). Jharkhand fulfils 25% of the Mica demand and Mica mining is banned for more than 15 years. But in absence of any other alternative livelihood options, Mica dependent families continue to extract Mica through informal ways (by using hand tools) and that has rendered them and their children in extremely exploitative conditions and poses a massive concern for overall socio-economic well being.

2. ABOUT EVALUATION/ SCOPE OF EVALUATION

This endline evaluation sought to examine the extent to which the project has brought meaningful results for project beneficiaries as well as to identify key areas, processes and approaches that can be replicated in similar interventions.

3. METHODOLOGY

The endline evaluation study has followed a mixed approach which incorporates both qualitative and quantitative tools to capture the required data from the direct beneficiaries of the project, institutions formed by the project, case studies of success stories and challenges faced. The study involved both primary and secondary research. For the secondary research, desk review of documents provided by TdH –NL and its partners were reviewed and assimilated into the report.



¹ <https://www.terredeshommes.nl/en/publications/beauty-and-a-beast>

4. MAIN FINDINGS

The findings were gathered both in terms of quantitative and qualitative achievements through employing appropriate tools and procedures. Brief details as provided below:

Partner-wise target achievements

This section represents quantitative and qualitative achievements of the implementing partners in their respective areas. This section illustrates that the partners have been successful in achieving the targets against the key indicators. It also reflects the partner's commitment to the project and the quality of guidance and handholding provided by TdH-NL.

The objective wise achievements

This section attempts to juxtapose the project's objectives with the activities undertaken and analyze how successful these activities were in establishing the relevance of the project. Strategies like children's forums (Bal Manch), Home-Based Early Childhood Education (ECE), and Income Generating Activities (IGA) are aligned with the project objectives and have been found to be successful in the field.

Case Studies and Testimonials

This section captures the success stories of the project.

COVID-19 Response

The project's role during the COVID-19 lockdown is analyzed and presented. The section mentions how home-based ECE, IGA, and relief work was carried out by TdH-NL in partnership with NGO partners.

A SWOT analysis

This was carried out with the participation of project staff and the wider representation of Balmanch children. The discussions brought out their valuable insights on the quality assurance of the project delivery. This exercise has been important in developing an understanding of the sustainability of the gained results.



5. LESSONS LEARNT AND GOOD PRACTICES

The project was undoubtedly a need-based intervention on the issue of the Worst Form of Child Labour (WFCL) in the areas where informal Mica mining takes place. It was designed in coordination with creditable NGO partners with a presence in the Mica mining areas. The project implementation has led to the emergence of various lessons learned and Good Practices. These Good practices contribute to building institutional learning and the possibility for its replication/adaptation in future projects. A chapter is dedicated to Good Practices and informs about various strategies and activities worth capturing such as – the Balmanch, Income Generation Activities, Mothers Committees, Sapath Patra, Involvement of women, Home-based ECE, the Mobile Library, digital learning facilities, and the significance of a field office to ensure continued guidance and support on techno-managerial aspects to ensure quality assurance of deliverables and accomplishing the activities within the scheduled time.

6.CONCLUSION

The conclusion chapter summarises the findings and is presented in two sections:

6.1. Conclusion based on project implementation which includes the following;

Project Design: The project design was comprehensive and holistic in its approach. The program design had a life cycle approach where children- and family strengthening was targeted through various components.

Implementation process: The project implementation was planned as a consortium of partners by pooling a mix of field experiences and technical expertise in project management. TdH-NL assumed the responsibilities of anchoring the project with a field office and placing staff members to provide handholding support and monitoring the quality of project deliverables.

Performance of the project: For most of the indicators, the project has outperformed its target and quantitative data speaks about the achievements of tangible project targets. The project was planned for three years 2018-2020

in a staged manner; 1) initial 2 years major focus was on creating enabling conditions for children and their families to come out from the exploitative conditions

2) the 3rd year, to sustain the improved conditions through advocacy measures with the authorities and key stakeholders of Mica supply chain to ensure 'free from child labour'. But unfortunately, the project could undertake intense advocacy efforts due to COVID-19 restrictions on organizing district/state level consultations. However, the project was able to showcase the best practices for the cause of children and their families through other available measures such as e-meetings, participating at district level core group meetings (invited by the district magistrate), and facilitating



visits of the Government officials in the communities.

Organizational management systems and their impact on project implementation:

The project has a well-defined organizational hierarchy right up to the village level. The strategy of employing the most suitable person from each village as a community education worker (CEW²) was very successful. Quality assurance of project deliverables was done through a strict monitoring system for partners with the use of WhatsApp and other Apps to ensure that activities and people movement are all taking place as planned. Furthermore, the availability of skilled persons in the village itself would be helpful to provide any support to the children and their families in future times.

² Community-level worker - responsible to facilitate and guide the implementation of project activities at the village level.

6.2. Conclusion based on the evaluation criteria

Relevance: Has the project done the right things?

TdH-NL Theory of Change puts the focus on the child and the family. Under the given circumstances, the cause and effect relationship between the increase in child labour and the limited employment opportunities for the adult family members has been clearly established.

Coherence: How well does the project fit?

The intervention has left only positive impacts on the community. There is literally no adverse impact of the project on the children, family, and community. However, it was gathered that as the project progressed, Mica-linked issues³ had been getting highlighted in the media and in the State Legislative Assembly by the elected representatives from the Mica mining areas.

Effectiveness: Has the project achieved its objectives?

The project has created a lot of institutional processes in the community. The child-centric life cycle approach and strategy have been extremely successful in the project. The project put the child rights narrative right at the heart of all the interventions planned. At the end of the 3 years of project implementation, one can easily observe the shift in the attitudes and perception of the community; a collective awareness of the need for child rights and child protection clubbed with the willingness to work toward making the lives of their children safe, secured and wholesome.

Efficiency: How well were the resources used?

The project design was beneficiary-centric. Engagement of children, family, and community in almost all activities of the project ensured maximum utilization of resources around the beneficiary. Even the field staff was appointed from the community. Thereby the team salary was practically utilized for developing knowledge and skills within the community. This is important for sustainability since this person remains in the community.

Impact: What effect has the project created?

This project has been successful in raising the issues of child exploitation in the mica mines with a child-centric bottom-up approach. Their intervention at the village level and their intensive work with the children and the community ensured that the children, their families, community members, and service providers at local & district levels are empowered to take accountability for the safety and protection of the children. The awareness generated on child rights and direct action like rescue and rehabilitation of victims of child labour and child marriage initiated dialogue and build public consensus on the issues of child protection.

Sustainability: Will the project outcomes last after the conclusion of the project?

The project had created enabling conditions for all the actors (children, families, communities, and institutional mechanisms) both at the individual level, collectively, and through coordination and collaboration with mandated protection institutional mechanisms to sustain the gained outcomes in future times.



³ It refers to the demand for resumption of Mica mining activities informal with due consideration to environmental and the prevailing socio-economic conditions. During the year senior Government officials (Mining Department and Rural Development, Government of Jharkhand) visited the areas and assessed the scope for rightful access of people to pick Mica from the scrapes using their traditional hand tools and potentiality to make it more formal. The inside report suggests that things are in the right direction but it has to go through a huge bureaucratic procedures.



7.RECOMMENDATION:

- The following are key recommendations based on the project achievements of between 2018-2020;

Remained Confined – the partners delivered what was expected at the grassroots village level and worked with the district administration on issues of access to social security schemes. However, overall the partners remained confined to the villages for their activities. The partners with their influence at the district could have moved beyond the confines of the village interventions.

Advocacy towards Legalisation of Mica mining – The project needs to be part of a larger advocacy call for the legalization of Mica Mining in Jharkhand. It would ensure regularization of the whole process that renders the “Mica supply chain free from child labour” and enable the Mica-dependent families to access fair market prices commensurate with earning their livelihood in dignified ways.

‘Letter of Promise’ with Mica contractors – The project may facilitate community groups along with PRI⁴s to pursue with the Mica purchasers at the community level to sign a ‘letter of promise’ to offer a rational price as social responsibility towards the cause of children. This would add to an increase in the family income and contribute towards the cause of children.

Revolving Fund – There is a need to strengthen the overall operation and management of the Revolving Fund to ensure the sustainability of community-led economic empowerment. This should include linking families and their respective Self Help Groups (SHGs)/Farmer’s club with the banks to ensure financial inclusion. The financial inclusion would be very helpful to the Mica-dependent families to have sustained access to diversified and enhanced outreach of additional livelihood options.

Targeted approach – The partners need to focus the entire target group in a planned manner to be covered in a 3 years project cycle on the basis of comprehensive community-level planning. It was observed that there were some confusions among other families which could be due to not engaging the entire families at the larger community level consultations while rolling out yearly action plans.

Village-based Community Planning – the 42 intervention villages selected for the project were all in need of intervention and the project reached its intended target population. However, it is recommended to associate the annual action plan of the project for the particular village with the annual village development plan under the stewardship of PRIs. This would render value addition to the overall development plan, enabling PRIs to include children’s needs in the mainstream development process, more recognition of the project and the increased visibility in the mainstream development process.

⁴ It refers to ‘Panchayati Raj Institution’ – a 3 tier system consisting of elected representatives for a fixed period of 5 years to administer socio-economic development projects in rural areas. Gram Panchayat (cluster of villages) is the basic unit of local administration. The system has three levels: Gram Panchayat (village level), Block level and District level).



1.INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 About Terre des Hommes - Netherlands

Terre des Hommes - Netherlands (TdH-NL) is one of the leading child rights-based organisations working in 18 countries. The organisation aims to prevent child exploitation, removes children from exploitative situations, and ensures these children can develop themselves in a safe environment. All interventions are guided by five-pronged approaches focused on Prevention, Provision, Prosecution, Promotion, Partnership, and Participation. In addition, TdH-NL undertakes humanitarian aid worldwide, focusing on children and their immediate protection needs in emergency situations, whether natural disasters, medical emergencies, conflicts, or war. The organisation works together with the family, environment, Government institutional mechanisms, the private sector, and civil society organisations. The organisation has established teams in each of the countries with staff members drawn from diversified backgrounds, expertise, and experiential learnings to pursue the mission of the organisation.

TdH-NL works with a multi-pronged, integrated, and community-led approach to combat child exploitation and brings sustainable improvement in the living conditions of vulnerable children and their families. All interventions are guided by the organisation's Theory of Change, which aspires to bring sustainable change through the following measures:

- Comprehensive analysis of the long-term causes and the barriers.
- Identification of key stakeholders- the key to bringing and sustain the desired change in the life of vulnerable children and their families.
- Facilitating the necessary conditions for the participation of children and their families to take charge of their own development.
- Coordination and linkages with Government authorities and institutional mechanisms- effectiveness of existing services and improved access to social entitlements.

In India, the organisation has been working since 1983 in socio-economically disadvantaged regions with a special focus on women and children. All interventions aim to bring a sustainable improvement in the quality of life for vulnerable children and their families. In addition, the organisation also undertook a humanitarian response either alone or in collaboration with international humanitarian agencies in almost all major crises occurring in the southern and eastern regions of the country. At present, the organisation is working in 27 districts of 6 states with 28 local NGO partners and reaching out to approximately 35,000 children and their families in need of care and protection.

1.2 ABOUT THE PROJECT

TdH-NL had undertaken a long term and comprehensive approach to eliminate the worst form of child labour from the Mica mining belt in Jharkhand, India. The intervention had been based upon a study in 2016 which reported 22,000⁵ children working in the Mica collection in the states of Jharkhand and Bihar in India. The majority of children either never attended school or were very irregular to school and worked along with their parents to meet their survival needs. Due to the formal ban on Mica mining and the absence of adequate, alternative income sources, people living at the upstream end of the Mica supply chain collect Mica using traditional hand tools. The income from informally collected Mica has been highly ungainful. In addition to this, poor economic conditions and lack of awareness about diversified and gainful additional livelihoods continued to increase the vulnerabilities of children and their families. Furthermore, the lack of awareness on social entitlements and poor access to the benefits of Government schemes form a hindrance for vulnerable families to be a part of the mainstream development process.

TdH-NL had initiated the grassroots level intervention by February 2016, and based on the learnings from that first project, TdH-NL has developed a comprehensive intervention plan to address the issues in a holistic manner. This project is part of a long term strategy with a project cycle of 3 years (2018-2020) with an aim to remove children from exploitative conditions, empower them and their families to take charge of their own development. The project titled “Elimination of worst forms of child labour (WFCL) in the Mica mining belt of Jharkhand, India” covers 42 villages⁶ was implemented in pursuit of attaining the broader, long-term goal of ‘a Mica supply chain free from child labour’. In conformity to the Theory of Change Outcomes and pathways, the project had envisaged the following outcomes:

- 1.Children are empowered to address the issues of child protection in Mica mining areas.
- 2.Parents and communities support children's access to education.
- 3.Lobby with the Jharkhand State government to enforce relevant laws and expand relevant welfare schemes.

The project comprised of provisioning, protection and participation measures to effectuate educational rehabilitation of children through enabling conditions in communities and schools, increased opportunities to enhance family income through community-led economic empowerment process, the effective functioning of protection mechanisms and engagement of key stakeholders of Mica supply chain along with improved coordination and linkages for increased outreach of the mainstream development process.



⁵ <https://www.terredeshommes.nl/en/publications/beauty-and-a-beast>

⁶ 10 villages were added in 2020 and the project activities are foreseen to be continued for next 2 years (December 2022). The geographic area for the completed 3 years cycle of the project are 32 villages (22 in Koderma and 10 villages in Giridih)

The project proactively engaged with the upstream and downstream companies associated with the Mica supply chain to eliminate child labour and contribute towards the protection of child rights and create enabling conditions for children and their families for an enhanced quality of life. In addition, efforts were also undertaken to promote a vibrant CSO network to advocate for children rights and the emergence of a multi-stakeholder platform in India to legalise (including the promulgation of mechanisms for gainful income for families at the upstream of Mica supply chain) under the stewardship of the 'Responsible Mica Initiative (RMI)'. RMI is an entity created to address the issues of child labour in the entire Mica supply chain for which TdH played a critical role, and retain a permanent board member position. The project was implemented through a consortium of local NGO partners; namely Bhartiya Kisan Sangh (BKS), Rashtriya Jharkhand Seva Sansthan (RJSS), and Jago Foundation (JF) with techno-managerial guidance of TdH-NL.

The project was implemented in 42 villages - 22 in Koderma (BKS-10, RJSS-12) and 20 villages in Giridih (JF-20).



The target beneficiaries under the project were:

Children (U18 years age): 11,914 children (boys – 5,850, girls – 6,064) of 42 villages will be mobilised to constitute 'Balmanch' as a children's forum to promote peer learning, active participation and assuming a significant role in decision making related to their own development, collectively upholding the culture of continuity in school and assuming responsibilities for operation and management of provisions (such as the mobile library and enhanced learning through the support of digital equipment). Gradually over the past 3 years 'Balmanch' also serves the purpose of raising any concerning issues of children with decision-making officials.

Families and community members: 3,730 families have been part of intensive awareness-raising on the significance of early childhood education, a continuation of school education and child protection issues. The project has undertaken efforts to map viable and gainful additional livelihoods as a means to enhance household income. All the families were organised to constitute savings- and credit linked 'self-help groups' to advance the socio-economic empowerment process. The project in consent with the self-help groups has extended support to the 1,004 most vulnerable families. The extended support is being pooled to create a revolving fund for the group through repayment by the families to their respective groups. The revolving fund is being recycled among other families and the process is ongoing.

Government officials: 131 officials comprising of community-level service providers, school teachers, officials from relevant Government departments (such as Education, Health, Social Welfare, Women and Child Development, Rural Development and General Administration) and representatives of child protection institutional mechanisms were consulted to devise mechanisms for effective and efficient delivery of project deliverables. Furthermore, the engagement of officials will ensure overall coordination and linkages for improved access of the population to the mainstream socio-economic development process.

The project eliminating WFCL in the Mica area through the local level interventions was expected to contribute to the following Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets;

Target 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking, sexual and other types of exploitation.

Target 8.7: Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms

Target 16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children. Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

7 The composition of MSP (Multi Stakeholder Platform) -CSO network, business communities, law makers and policy makers.

8 The project has been able to reach out additional 245 families through recycling of the revolving fund. By the end of March 2021, it is expected to add up approx 450 families.

1.3 AREA PROFILE:

The Mica mining belt of Jharkhand is one of the most disadvantaged geographic regions of India due to various socio-economic and political factors such as left-wing extremist activities.⁹ The situation deteriorated due to the formal ban on Mica mining which used to be a lucrative source of livelihoods. Despite the formal ban, people with no other choice to meet survival needs, resorted to labor-intensive ways (using handheld tools) for digging and picking Mica scraps; and selling the Mica scraps at prices¹⁰ determined as per the whims and wishes of the buyers. The very low volume of Mica collection per family and sales at low prices continued to deteriorate the socio-economic conditions and the children suffered the most.



The entire Mica mining belt in Jharkhand and Bihar is one of the most backward regions due to very poor key development indicators. A brief status of the key socio-economic indicators¹¹ are as follows:

Female literacy is less than 50% and completion of 10 years of schooling is less than 19%.

Girls getting married below 18 years of age is 58% (Jharkhand -3rd highest in India with 28%).

Children U5 with incidence of being stunted is 45% and incidence of being underweight is 41%.

Children and women (15-49 years) being anemic is 66%.

Jharkhand¹² came into existence on 15th November 2000 and it is situated on the Chota-Nagpur plateau. The Current Population of Jharkhand in 2020 is estimated to be 3,69,83,680 with a population density of 414.¹³ The ratio of female to male is 941 females per 1000 males. The quantum of mineral production in Jharkhand accounts for 46% of the total production in India. Whenever a family is migrating from rural areas to any of the urban agglomerations, the chances of the children remaining out of school increase and this creates a large number of child labourers in the urban centers in Jharkhand. The children belonging to these families live in conditions of extreme poverty. They live in an utterly degraded environment without proper health services and proper sanitation facilities and as a result, are exposed to a large number of diseases. For various reasons, these children are often deprived of the advantages of education which makes their descent into the spiral of generational poverty inevitable. Detailed information is attached as [annexure 1](#).

⁹ Jharkhand has been severely affected by leftwing extremist activities since 1994 and Mica mining areas was one of the region severely affected. However since past 6-7 years naxalite activities have been under control.

¹⁰ During normal times (INR 15-20 per kg) and during distress time it could be even upto INR 5 per kg during COVID-19 (unlocking phase -I)

¹¹ Source : National Family Health Survey -4 (2015-16) and Census (2011)

¹² <http://www.cini-india.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Jharkhand-Report.pdf>

¹³ Population Of Jharkhand 2020 (Demographic, Facts, Etc) – India Population 2020

2.SCOPE OF EVALUATION

The goal of the project

The specific overall goal of this project is the elimination of the worst form of child labour in the Mica mining belt of Jharkhand. The engagement of children in the Mica supply chain by their families for survival needs is one of the most exploitative situations and forms a significant hindrance to their development.

The goal of the evaluation:

- To provide documented achievements realized and the extent to which intended outcomes were achieved.
- To gather Good Practices emerged as the potential sign for sustainability of attained outcomes.
- To gather information about what went well and what did not go well and the factors responsible.
- To serve as institutional learning for key stakeholders and the organisation to fine-tune the future interventions.



The specific objectives of the study were:

- To examine project components, strategies, models of action, and activities that can be replicated in future interventions of similar nature.
- To identify lessons learned and recommendations for future implementation of the elimination of the worst form of child labour in (WFCL)' from the exploitative situations.
- To assess the level of awareness, skill, and knowledge gained by project partners and community-level service delivery mechanisms in sustaining this positive change in the lives of vulnerable children and their families.
- To evaluate project efficiency in utilization of the knowledge and skills in the implementation of the WFCL project.



Rationale and Objectives for the Study:

This endline study was conducted to measure the impact and assess the achievements against the targets of the WFCL project in the 2 districts. This evaluation sought to examine the extent to which the project has brought meaningful results for project beneficiaries as well as to identify key areas, processes, and approaches that can be replicated in similar interventions. The study also evaluated the exit policy of the project to assess the scope for the sustainability of the interventions initiated at the community level.



The endline evaluation also focused on the following aspects of this project to develop and present a better and more holistic understanding of the impact of the interventions.

- Project design,
- Implementation process,
- Performance of the project (Quantitative and Qualitative),
- Organisational management systems and their impact on project implementation,
- Quality assurance of project deliverables.



The evaluation assessed the achievements against the target, the extent to which the foreseen outcomes have been accomplished, and how the flow of actions was aligned with the Theory of Change (ToC). It also covered the project design, implementation procedures, mechanisms for quality assurance of project deliverables, and overall performance against all OECD¹⁴ standard criteria to attain its defined purpose. In addition, the evaluation also emphasized strengthening institutional learnings by gathering lessons learned and Good Practices of the project. The qualitative and quantitative data were collected from the field in a participatory manner by using approved tools and procedures in consent with TdH-NL. The tools comprised an exhaustive list of questions and a few key questions were as under:

- To what extent have the foreseen targets been achieved within the stipulated time frame?
- To what extent could the project adopt a participatory approach? (e.g. planning, organizing the implementation of project activities, and monitoring the quality assurance of the deliverables).
- To what extent are project interventions like Home-based ECE, income generation activities (IGA), and Balmanch likely to remain vibrant and continue to transfer the legacy in future times?
- To what extent were the organisational structures on the part of the implementing partners and TdH-NL effective and efficient to deliver the project within the stipulated time frame?
- What examples, lessons, and experiences coming out of the project could potentially be replicated or scaled up in the design and implementation of other projects?
- What has been the impact of the COVID-19 humanitarian response on the project?



¹⁴ OECD-DACH <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>



3.METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The evaluation followed a mixed approach using both qualitative and quantitative methods to capture the required data from the direct beneficiaries of the project, community organisations,¹⁵ case studies of success stories, and challenges faced. The tools for the primary data collection were finalized through consultation with lead members of NGO partners and TdH-NL staff members.

The data were collected through primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected from the 8 sample villages¹⁶ on a random basis (20% Of the 42 intervention villages) spread over 4 blocks in Koderma and Giridih districts. The primary respondents were the project's direct beneficiaries (such as rescued and rehabilitated children, Balmanch children, Self-Help Group (SHG) members, Livelihood beneficiaries, Anganwadi workers,¹⁷ and Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) members.

The data were collected through Key Informant Interview (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) as per the appropriateness and conformity with the COVID-19 protocols issued by the Government.

The study proactively pursued participatory learning-cum-consultative sessions with the involvement of the project staff members and Balmanch children¹⁸ at the field office locations of each NGO partner. Each of the partner NGOs also provided detailed information about the achievements over a period of 3 years in their specific areas of operation. The project leads of each partner NGO and TdH-NL lead staff members responsible for field-level coordination and management were also interviewed. The approach for the data collection was participatory with an exclusive intent to serve as learning for all who have been associated with the delivery of the project.

¹⁵ Balmanch, Self-Help Groups/Farmer's club/ Women's Groups

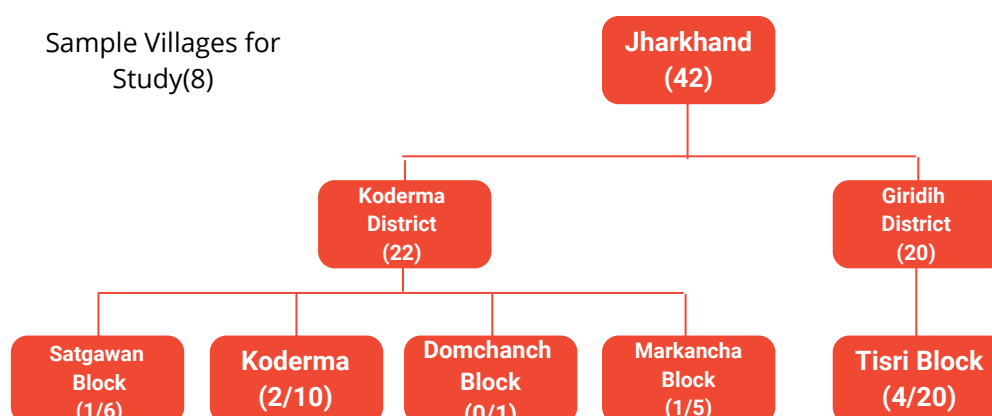
¹⁶ Koderma block -2 villages, Satgawan block-1 village, Markacho -1 village and Tisri -2 villages.

¹⁷ Anganwadi worker is a community-based front line worker of the nationwide Integrated Child Development Services(ICDS) programme. She is the plays a crucial role in promoting child growth and development and facilitating pre-school learnings for young children (3-6 years of age). She is also an agent of social change, mobilizing community support for better care of young children.

¹⁸ Children of 22 Balmanch from the operational areas of respective NGO partners at their field offices.

3.2 Sampling and Sample size

For this study, a mix of purposive and random sampling methods was used to select the sample of 8 villages¹⁶ from 42 villages spread over 5 blocks in Giridih and Koderma districts. Brief details on the sampling are demonstrated below:



The sample size and target respondents were finalized through consultation with TdH-NL and the NGO partners. The respondents were selected for the study with due consideration to ensure wide representation, validity, reliability of the findings, and their intent to be part of the learning exercise by adhering to the COVID-19 protocols.

3.3. Primary data Collection:

The primary data was collected using the following methods:

- SWOT analysis (overall project implementation and quality of project delivered on the project components) -consultative sessions with the involvement of project staff and Balmanch children.
- Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the Balmanch members and Livelihood beneficiaries.
- Meeting with Self-Help Groups/ Farmer's club.
- Community meetings.KIIs¹⁹ with Community Education Workers (CEW), PRI members, and VLCPC²⁰ members.
- Informal interviews with Project lead of NGO partners and TdH-NL staff members.
- Informal Interview with Government Officials - Block Development Officer (BDO) and Block Medical officer (BMO).
- Case Studies of rescued and rehabilitated children into mainstream education.
- Field observation in natural settings.

¹⁹ Collective representation from all villages at the respective project locations.

²⁰ Village Level Child Protection Committee.

3.2 Tools for the Study:

Primary data was collected using specific tools for a wide range of respondents in the overall perspective of the study. The following provides an overview of the tools:

Tool	No. of respondents covered	Respondent Type	Type of tool
Case Study	7	Rescued and rehabilitated children	Open Ended
FGD	8 Balmanch (125 children at 8 locations)	Children Forum (8 sample villages)	Open Ended
	Self-Help Groups/Kisan Clubs (8 in each of 8 villages)	Beneficiaries supported with additional livelihoods (Income Generation and creation of revolving fund)	Open Ended
KIIs	3 CEWs and 3 PRI members	Community Education Workers and Village level Institutional set up	Open Ended
	Individual family (supported with Livelihood options) -40	Direct recipient of the support on IGA.	Open Ended
	3 PRI members	Representatives of village level administrative setup	Open Ended
Interview Schedule	8 Balmanch (125 children at 8 locations)	NGO Staff (04) and Government Officials (03)	Open Ended
SWOT Analysis	Project staff members of 3 NGO partners (51) and Balmanch children (45)	Project staff members and Balmanch children	Open Ended



3.2 Desk Review

The evaluation design also reviewed and analyzed the data gathered from Management Information System (MIS) database, accomplishments against indicators in the resulting framework, monitoring reports, and routine process documents (such as case stories and the best practices). In addition, a baseline survey, the findings, and recommendations of the mid-term review (MTR) were also taken into account to remain aligned with the scope and purpose of the study. The desk review also considered the consistency of the overall project delivery according to the outlined pathways and engagement of the actor(s) according to the theory of change (ToC). Additionally, the study reviewed relevant articles and study reports related to issues like child labor, Mica mining, and ethical practices in Mica mining. The evaluation established a logical model of cause-effect linkages by exploring the delivery of results. Lastly, reports by government and non-governmental organisations on the status of child labour in the two states were looked into.

3.4 Limitations

- The travel restrictions due to COVID-19 slowed down the data collection process.
- NGO partners and the potential respondents seemed to be well prepared due to advanced information about the end-line evaluation.
- The evaluation team was completely dependent on the partners to connect with the respondents due to geographical challenges and the contextual realities (as the Mica region had witnessed severe left-wing extremism in the recent past). The evaluation team did not have much freedom in choosing the respondents.
- The tools could not capture some of the ground-level initiatives like nutrition gardens, community education workers, and para teachers.
- The rescued and rehabilitated children could not be located in many villages as all the children seemed to have multiple options for joyful engagement thanks to the vibrancy and the positive vibes generated by Balmanch.
- The team could not locate any child rescued and rehabilitated in the recent past but validated with the children who have been reintegrated into the mainstream education system. Thanks to TdH-NL and NGO partners for the long-term initiative, comprehensive programming, and promotion of a children-led mechanism in each village. Further proactiveness to align the project activities as per the demand of COVID-19 and concern for the best interest of the child is highly appreciated. This is an unforeseen achievement of the project.



3.3. Procedures for data²⁰ collection and analysis:

Primary data was collected by a field team of 4 members under complete supervision and guidance of lead members of 'Independent Thought'²¹(IT). The lead members of IT were based in Koderma for the entire duration of 10 days of fieldwork and provided adequate training and handholding support to the team members. The data collection was done in 2 groups with each group led by one lead member of IT. The field team coordinated with the representatives of TdH -NL and the respective NGO partners for smooth conduct of the study and completion of the fieldwork within the stipulated time schedule. The respective NGO partners facilitated the necessary logistics and coordination with the children, families, communities, and identified respondents. The field team was then mobilized to the sample village to collect data from the primary respondents. During the data collection process, the field team followed the COVID-19 protocols. For the purpose of data collection and analysis, some of the data were extracted from the documents, reports, etc. shared by partner organisations and TdH - NL. Details are included in [annexure 2](#).

21 [The external agency deputed for the assignment of end line evaluation of Mica consortium project.](#)

4. MAIN FINDINGS:

The finding of the study covering the entire 3 years of the project cycle (2018-20) are presented in the section below:

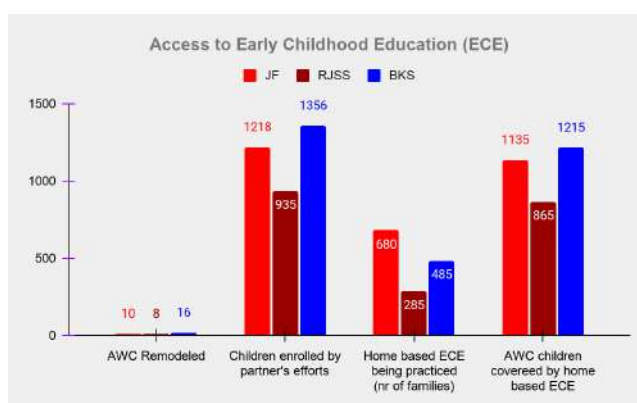
1. Partner wise achievements: Quantitative achievements (2018-2020) against the key project activities by the NGO partners.
2. Objective wise achievements: Qualitative aspects of project implementation in relation to accomplishment of the 3 specific objectives of the project.
3. Case Stories and testimonials: Key stakeholders and contributors towards the cause of the project.
4. SWOT Analysis: Key findings through participatory exercises with collective participation of project staff (NGO partners) and Balmanch children.



4.1. Partnerwise Findings

• 4.1.1. Improved access to Early Childhood Education (ECE) for children (3-6 years of age)

The project has performed very well in improving the access to ECE through training, handholding support to Anganwadi workers, and creating a child-friendly learning environment. The striking features observed were the extensive use of available resources in the villages in preparation of teaching and learning materials for children. The project also equipped the 34 Anganwadi centers with additional child-friendly learning materials to ensure children adequately acquire desired pre-school learning. The interactions with Anganwadi workers confirmed their happiness and sense of acknowledgment towards TdH-NL for the help in acquiring the necessary skills to take forward the conducive conditions for child-friendly learning.

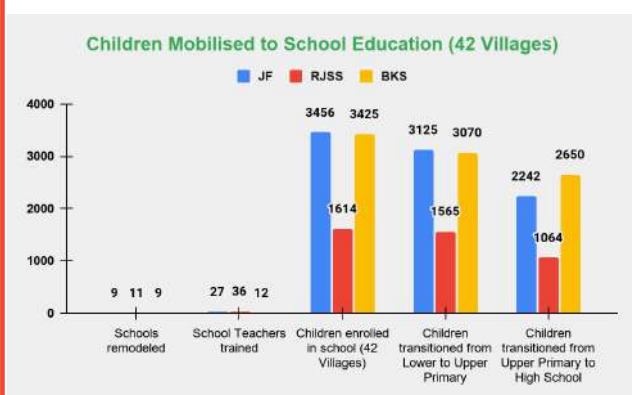


The project intensively facilitated home-based ECE “user-friendly and easy to adopt-Mothers as Teachers” to minimize the negative effects of COVID-19 lockdown on age-specific learning for young children. This method highlighted the exclusive use of available resources at the household level to create a joyful learning environment for the children.

The evaluation team observed that approximately 80%²² of families (with U5 children) were practicing home-based ECE with child-friendly display materials (focused on language development, numeracy skills) and other activities related to cognitive and creative skills in their own home. This benefits their own children as well as neighborhood children. This is indeed a commendable effort that reflects the commitment for the cause of children in every situation.

²² 125 out of 160 families during the course of visiting 8 sample villages for the study.

4.1.2. Efforts on academic engagement for school going children (6-18 years):

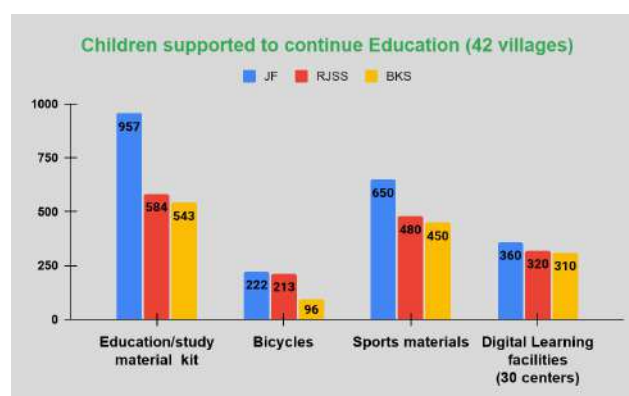


Children engaged in Mica mining activities/Mica supply chain are generally less likely to get enrolled in school due to several factors such as economic conditions of the families, inadequate outreach of enrollment campaigns, distance to school, and lack of a conducive environment for education. Furthermore, even after enrollment, these children are at high risk of dropping out as the primary needs for survival assume the topmost priority. In absence of any socially concerning initiatives and enabling conditions, children and their families move further away from mainstream education.

The continued support from TdH-NL and the efforts from all NGO partners ensured enrollment of 8,395 children, following up their transition from lower primary to upper primary (93%) and from upper primary to high school (76%) through creating conducive conditions for a child-friendly learning environment in 29 schools and equipping with appropriate teaching and learning materials. School teachers and children were found very happy and expressed a sense of acknowledgment to the project. These are indeed notable accomplishments for the cause of vulnerable children.

4.1.3 Enabling conditions for sustained academic engagement of children:

The provisioning of education materials learning kits and study materials), bicycles to commute easily to school (distance was the main barrier for children for upward movement of children from lower primary level to upper primary level and matriculation), support of sports materials for children and provisioning of digital learning facilities in 30 villages were found to be a significant contribution to ensure an enabling environment for the children to continue their education. It has benefitted a cumulative total of 5,185 children across 42 villages. 350 girls with the support of bicycles have been life-changing moments for the children and their families.

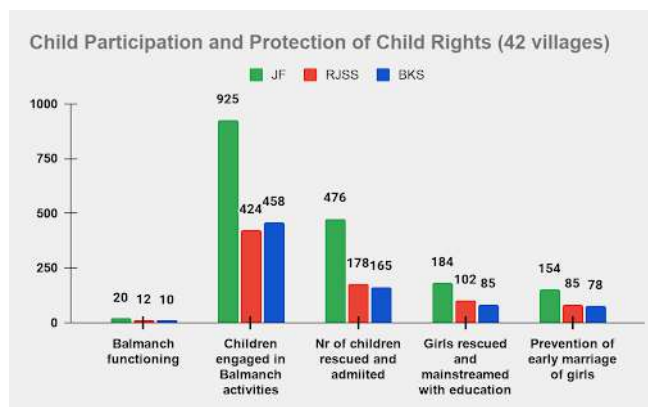


It has immensely contributed to the promotion of girls' education. It is a highly commendable achievement of the project. During the visit to 8 villages, it was noted that support of bicycles to 64 girls had been instrumental in the successful completion of the 10th standard and more than 80% already took admission in 11th standard. Furthermore, in 3 such villages, it had been a lifetime achievement for the girls completing 10th standard, thanks to the TdH-NL for adding a new dimension to the lives of children.

4.1.4. Efforts on protection of children and access to their rights:

Child rights and child protection were the key components around which the intervention strategies and activities were planned in the project. The project has proactively addressed the issues of child labour linked to child protection issues such as child marriages and their disengagement from mainstream education. It was found that Balmanch constituted in all the villages has been vigilant on the children issues/concern and coordinated very well with the existing child protection mechanisms to address the issue and successfully facilitated the children and their parents to bring them back into academic engagement. The most noticeable feature has been efforts to prevent the early marriage of 251 girls and rehabilitating them to mainstream education through the necessary provisions and joyful engagement with Balmanch members.

It is important to underline that the prevalence of early child marriage is 38%²³ (3rd highest in the country) and the Mica region is highly prone to this due to poor socio-economic conditions. The collective efforts through community-led mechanisms in coordination with mandated child protection structures is a praiseworthy accomplishment. Hence the formation of Balmanch and confidence-building measures through activity-based learning could be termed as the most effective strategy to address the protection issues at the community level. This has also helped the children to grow together through peer sharing and learning including ease in transfer of legacy from seniors to juniors.



4.1.5. Efforts on improving the learning environment for children at the community level:

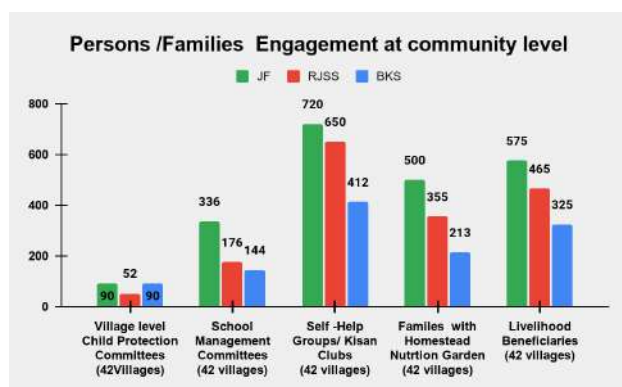
The project had provided a mobile library at the community level across all 42 villages to create and uphold a conducive environment for peer learning and sharing for the children at the community level. The mobile library was found equipped with a range of reading materials²⁴ for self-awareness and personal development in addition to the routine academic literature. The study observed that the mobile libraries immensely benefited children by providing increased opportunities for sharing and learning. Mobile libraries in the sample villages were found well operated and managed by the Balmanch members. It was also noted that on-demand of Balmanch children, these mobile libraries were also supplemented with academic²⁵ materials to minimize the negative impact of COVID-19 on learning due to the closure of schools since April 2020. The team got very positive feedback from children about the utility of contents in the mobile library and the majority of the children expressed that additional materials have been very helpful for them. They are confident to perform very well at the upcoming board examinations.

²³ The national average is 28% . Other 2 States are Bihar and West Bengal with more than 40%

²⁴ [Inspirational stories, discoveries/inventions, biographies of great personalities, social and cultural awareness, information about the world, own country and Jharkhand and general knowledge.](#)

²⁵ [Dictionaries \(English to Hindi, Hindi to English\) and Grammar books \(English, Hindi, Sanskrit\).](#)

4.1.6. Efforts on community engagement:



Community engagement is the cornerstone to providing an overall conducive environment for children to attain their full potential. Community-level organisations and institutional mechanisms equipped with the necessary skills play a major role in preventing child rights violations. The community also becomes more accountable for the safety and security of the children. The project strengthened the existing institutional mechanisms (such as Village Level Child Protection Committees and School Management Committees) to ensure effective functioning to address child protection issues/concerns. The project also promoted Self-Help Groups/ Kisan Clubs and strengthened 'Mother Committees'²⁶ as a means for the emergence of community-led socio-economic empowerment processes. The most vulnerable 1,365²⁷ families were engaged through IGA support and were linked with the respective SHGs/ Kisan Clubs to sustain the positive changes in the lives of their children and the entire family. In addition, 1,068 families (756-families with U5 children, 312-families with pregnant women) were also supported to strengthen/establish the practice of household nutrition²⁸ gardens through the planting of 12 varieties of green and leafy vegetables.

Almost all families have been found practicing homestead nutrition gardening for 2 seasons and it has been contributing towards the self-sustenance of supplementary nutrition at the household level. The beneficiaries of Income Generation Activities indirectly contributed to the child protection efforts. The IGA beneficiaries were all required to sign a "promissory note"²⁹ to be eligible to receive support for any additional livelihood activities. It has been observed to be a very good regulatory practice to mainstream the child protection issue across all actions as well as ensuring accountability of parents towards their children. It was observed that more than 90% (72/80) of the IGA supported beneficiaries reported to have increased their income by 35-40% and the increased income has helped to pull out their children from Mica collection activities. They were very happy to ensure sustained academic engagement for their children. It was also noted that almost all the families have been concerned about the academics of their children during the COVID-19 lockdown and the majority of them have been sending their children (specific reference to children studying in 8th-12th standard) to private tuition/coaching centers to keep children in good stead of academic learning during the COVID-19 lockdown.

²⁶ Mothers Committee-Mata Samiti" under the aegis of Department of Social Welfare (Government of Jharkhand) functions under the stewardship of anganwadi centers in each village. It aspires to promote appropriate health and nutrition practices among women and children attending anganwadi center.

²⁷ 1,004 families through direct support and 361 through recycling of revolving fund.

²⁸ It refers to home based practices that could address supplementary nutrition by ensuring round the year availability of green and leafy vegetables for families with U5 children and families with pregnant women.

²⁹ It refers to a kind of declaration by families (who will be receiving IGA support either directly through the project or through recycling of the revolving fund) to use the additional income for the social well being of children as the topmost priority along with a promise that children will never be ever be engaged in any activity that amounts to violation of children rights including no engagement of children in any activity (s) associated with the Mica supply chain.

4.1.7. Efforts on access to social protection/social welfare schemes:

The project has done tremendous work in facilitating improved access to prevailing social protection/social welfare schemes through various measures. The project staff members proactively organised community-level awareness meetings and involved relevant Government officials as well. The team observed an increased level of awareness and intent on part of the families to approach and avail the relevant schemes in accordance with the eligibility criterion. The project has also developed a mobile application in the local language as well to ensure digital interfacing of the Government schemes. The study team acknowledges the efforts to facilitate the Mica-dependent families to be part of the mainstream development process and is hopeful that the improved linkages between families/communities with panchayat will render them in good stead in future times as well. The following overview provides brief details of the accomplishment were as :



Sl.	Particulars of schemes	Persons/families benefited			
		JF	RJSS	BKS	Total
1	Birth Registration	441	185	385	1,011
2	Old Age Pension	183	154	210	547
3	Govt Housing Scheme	185	148	135	468
4	Ration card	323	256	365	944
5	Entitlements for PwDs (Person with Disabilities)	85	54	42	181
6	Ayushman Health Card	218	125	136	479
7	MNREGA Job Cards	935	545	465	1,945
8	Agro-Horticulture based Livelihood	59	42	52	153
9	Rainwater Harvesting measures (ponds)	125	65	42	232
10	Girl Child Prosperity Scheme	215	132	165	512
11	Kisan Samman Yojna	850	454	365	1,669



4.2. Objective wise achievements :

This section captures the aspects/initiatives undertaken by the project to accomplish the outlined 3 specific project objectives. The specific objectives were as follows:

Specific Objective 1: Children are empowered to address the issues of child protection in Mica mining areas.

Specific Objective 2: Parents, communities, and institutional mechanisms support children's access to education.

Specific Objective 3: Engage with the Jharkhand State Government to enforce relevant laws and improve access to relevant social welfare schemes.

4.2..1 Early Childhood Education (Specific Objective 1 and Specific Objective 2)

The efforts on improving access to ECE through existing institutions and home-based initiatives³⁰ have been found well aligned with the mentioned specific objectives that *"Children are empowered to address the issues of child protection in Mica mining areas"* and *"Parents, communities and institutional mechanisms support children's access to education"*.

The project worked to ensure enrollment of all eligible children at their respective Anganwadi centers by providing an attractive look and creating a child-friendly learning environment. The project proactively engaged communities in making the Anganwadi centers attractive, creating child-friendly and joyful learning environments through the exclusive use of available resources in the communities. The Anganwadi workers were trained and facilitated to conduct joyful learning activities by use of a new look for Anganwadi centers and the effective use of TLM (Teaching and Learning Materials) to keep the children in good stead of preschool learnings. This had led to an increase in enrollment of children and the interest of children and their families to spend quality time at these centers.

The project also emphasized home-based ECE to keep the children at a good pace of age-specific learning and augment the effectiveness of learning in their respective Anganwadi centers. The extensive efforts on the promotion of home-based ECE are found to be the most significant, effective, and efficient activity towards age-specific learning, cognitive skills development, and acquiring aptitude for the preschooling stage. This has been of immense benefit for the parents /caretakers to learn and adopt a 'user-friendly ECE approach' to take care of their children during the COVID-19 lockdown which closed the Anganwadi centers for the past 9 months of 2020. The most notable aspects of home-based ECE have been the range of activities and how this is easily manageable by each family with the exclusive use of resources/facilities available considering their socio-economic conditions. The team found that the home-based ECE practices have reached 95% (1,415/1,572) of the families. The efforts in designing, extensive rolling out and facilitation of home-based ECE could be termed as a significant achievement for the young children. During the course of interacting with 80 families, it was noticed that all of them were very happy to learn and adapt to the home-based ECE. They thanked TdH-NL for such a simple initiative for the cause of their children and are very excited to continue this in future times on their own.

³⁰ Easy to learn and Easy to adopt with exclusive use of materials/resources available irrespective of socio-economic conditions.



The study team also interacted with other children and found that children were very happy and gave all credit to the Balmanch to bring changes in their lives. The most striking aspects have been inculcating the habit of reading, development of team spirit, and the confidence in themselves in expressing concerns/issues with duty bearers.

However, the members also shared some of their concerns:

- There are 10-20% of children who continue to pick Mica in a few villages (mainly those adopted in the year 2020).
- School is far and hence traveling every day is a problem (no transportation facilities)
- There are not enough teachers in schools.
- Drinking water is not available in many schools and in some homes.

Balmanch remains one of the most successful interventions of the project as it proved a more convenient way to organize children, develop a collective approach and create awareness on key protection issues among them. Balmanch also provided a platform for children for self-development and aspirations to become change agents. The willingness and ability of the members to interact with the evaluation team were the most welcome and encouraging. Balmanch members were found confident about themselves to take forward the Balmanch activities by themselves as per the established procedures and upkeep the spirit of Balmanch in motion after the conclusion of the project. However, in newly adopted villages, Balmanch needs to be further strengthened as the project could not provide adequate inputs/ quality time with the Balmanch children due to COVID-19 lockdown. The evaluation team is sure that the project will be continued for the next 2 years in these villages to complete the project cycle of 3 years.



Balmanch (Specific Objective 1)

The constitution of Balmanch across all 42 villages (with the active participation of 2,713 children) was one of the key strategies to accomplish the objective of “Children are empowered to address the issues of child protection in Mica mining areas”. The Balmanch constitute children in an age group of 10-17 years organised to work collectively for the common cause protecting their rights, addressing /raising their concerns/issues as the hindrance in their development in coordination with the existing protection mechanisms and relevant duty bearers. Each Balmanch functions under the stewardship of a democratically elected president, secretary, and the shared leadership of 5 sub-committees (such as an Education Committee, a Nutrition committee, a Health and Sanitation Committee, an Environment committee, and a Sports and cultural committee).

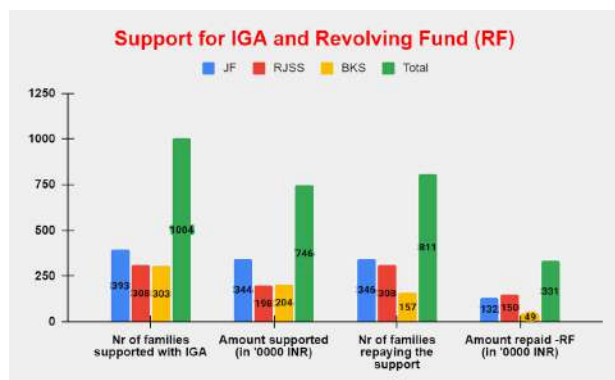
The project had trained Balmanch members on various aspects (such as life skills, team building, child rights, child protection mechanisms) providing continued handholding support to build confidence and the culture of collective functioning. The project staff members have helped them to record the proceeding of the meetings.

Balmanch in each village³¹ has been found meeting at least once a month and working collectively towards the identification and addressing protection issues/concerns. The most highlighting features noted in the study about the functioning of Balmanch in selected 8 sample villages are highlighted here:

- Monitored the continuity of children in academic engagement (545 children) and none were found engaged in Mica collection activity.
- Counseled parents to send their children to school and not to engage in Mica collection (54 cases in 8 villages)
- Identification of the children at risk of either being irregular or getting dropped out.
- Promoted extensive peer sharing and learning-use of mobile libraries, studying in small groups and facilitating access to online academic sessions through the identification of sites in the villages with better internet connectivity.
- Actively participated in identifying children to receive support (such as study materials, bicycles) and monitoring the usage of support.
- Expressing the needs for specific academic supplements in the mobile libraries- to ensure academic excellence for fellow children.
- Monitoring the quality of the activities implemented by the project and providing feedback on the quality and suggestions for improvement in the future.
- Actively participated in creating awareness on child rights, child marriages, and the key hygienic messages to safeguard from community infection due to COVID-19.
- Successfully coordinated with representatives of protection mechanisms on prevention of early marriages of girls (42 cases) and brought them back in mainstream education.
- Elder members of Balmanch facilitated psychosocial activities for 425 young fellows in small groups (3-4 children per group) to keep them joyfully engaged during COVID-19 lockdown.
- Actively led the promotion of homestead nutrition gardening among 185 families.

³¹ Chadedih, Charadih (BKS areas-10 villages), Banmura, Kishuniya (RJSS areas-12 villages), Kishutand, Manjhladih, Hethli Kanhay and Jogiypahari (JF areas - 20 villages).

4.2.2. Income Generation Activities (Specific Objective 2):



The component of income generation activities (IGA) has been found aligned with the objective of “Parents, communities and institutional mechanisms support children’s access to education”. It corroborated to establish the fact that Mica-dependent families battling with poverty were more likely to engage their children in labour. The project had followed well-defined procedures in the selection and prioritization of the most vulnerable families³² through comprehensive community consultations with the participation of PRI representatives. The selected families were mobilized to constitute a “Self-Help Group (SHG)” as a means to pursue collective efforts in addressing issues in daily life conditions. These SHGs would also be instrumental in the emergence of a community-led economic empowerment process that would render the Mica-dependent families in good stead to address future needs by themselves.

The project extended financial support to 1,004 families amounting to approximately INR 75 lakh over a period of 3 years through the individual bank accounts. The financial support was extended to the families on the basis of a prerequisite mutual agreement between families and SHGs. The agreement underlined that the support received from the project would be repaid back to respective SHGs. The income generated would be prioritized for the education needs of children. The project successfully facilitated the adoption of additional livelihoods for 1,004 families based on the individual choices in conformity with available skills, gainful income generation activities linked to the market demand.

Based on the report and interaction with beneficiaries, the findings had been as follows:

- 80% (811/1,004) families started the repayment of the IGA support to their respective SHGs/Farmer’s clubs.
- 44% of IGA support led to the establishment of a Revolving Fund (INR 33 lakh) in 42 villages.
- 361 families were reported to have received support from the recycling of the fund and 25 such cases were observed by the evaluation team in their sample villages.
- 75% of SHGs had their own bank accounts and were in the course of effective functioning.
- 85% of the IGA supported families reported to have increased their family income 35-40% (on an average INR 2,500 to INR 3,000 per month).
- 90% (36/40) of the families reported having used their income on education (private tuition, study materials, etc.) and other needs of the children.



³²Families with rescued children, Female headed families, PwD headed families and Families taking care of relatives’ children.

4.2.3. Letter of Promise ‘ Shapath Patra’ by the families (Specific Objective 2)

The mandatory signing of the “Shapath Patra” by all the IGA beneficiaries under the stewardship of the ‘Self-Help Group’ had been found as a significant community-led endeavor to ensure commitment by the families towards the issues of child rights and child protection. Shapath Patra is an undertaking signed by the families (IGA beneficiaries either received direct support from the project or through recycling of the revolving fund) and it was found mandatory to uphold their children’s rights at all times. This had contributed to increasing the accountability of the family towards the safety and welfare of their children. The project partner was also a signatory to the Shapath Patra, and hence it had created a space for itself at the family level to promote the social well-being of the children. This had led to increased rapport building with the families and counseling them in their own space to act in the best interest of the child under all circumstances. The quantum of financial support to the family for IGA was small but the Shapath Patra is proved to be of immense value to address child protection issues. It also facilitated the emergence of a vibrant, community-led economic empowerment process that would render them in good stead to sustain the positive changes in future times.



4.2.4 Effective Functioning of Institutional Mechanisms: (Specific Objective 2)

The project strengthened the existing institutional mechanisms (such as Village Level Child Protection Committees and School Management Committees) mandated for the protection of children and facilitating them to access their rights. The project had strengthened VLCPCs and SMCs across all 42 villages and there have been good examples across all the villages where these institutional mechanisms effectively demonstrated 100% enrollment of children, educational rehabilitation of children in coordination with respective Balmanch and significantly contributed to the prevention of early marriages of girls across all the villages through awareness and rescue measures.

The evaluation team interacted with 6 lead members of VLCPCs/SMCs during the course of the study. All of them were found to have an increased level of awareness about their functional roles and responsibilities and the intent to extend support to the Balmanch in addressing any protection concerns/issues. It was also noticed that in the sample villages, 45 cases of early marriage of girls were successfully prevented and children were brought back to mainstream education and were reintegrated with the Balmanch. The approach to strengthening the functioning of institutional mechanisms was acknowledged by the trained representatives and recorded as a major aspect of working with mainstream institutional arrangements.



4.2.5. Access to Government Schemes (Specific Objective 3)



Connecting community members with relevant government schemes (social protection and social welfare) have been found aligned with the objective to “Engage with the Jharkhand State Government to enforce relevant laws and improve access to relevant social welfare schemes” .The project has been very successful in facilitating the Mica families to access relevant government schemes available through awareness sessions, interface meetings with relevant government officials, and strengthening improved coordination and linkages. The project has also developed a ‘mobile application in the local language with user-friendly features’ for widespread dissemination about the contents of the latest schemes and enabling families to ensure easy access to the schemes through establishing digital connectivity. The evaluation team noticed an increased level of awareness among the families about the prevailing social welfare and social protection schemes. It was also gathered each family has been able to access 2 to 3 social welfare /social protection schemes (such as ration card, job card, housing schemes, Girl child prosperity scheme, health insurance, old-age pension, etc) and the process is going on very well. The team also noted that increased access to Government schemes had also helped the families on the aspects of financial inclusion, as all monetary benefits that are directly disbursed into the bank accounts of the individual families.

4.2.6 Implementing Laws and Accessing Schemes (Specific Objective 3)

The project had envisaged to advocate and lobby with the state Government to implement the child protection laws with regard to ensuring ‘Mica supply chain free from child labour’ through effective engagement of all key stakeholders. The efforts of the project had been found very intense at the community level and district level in creating and enabling conditions through provisioning of key support, promoting through improved capacities of institutional mechanisms and partnering with key stakeholders to ensure long-lasting changes in the lives of the vulnerable children and their families. The project has performed very well on these aspects, but work on advocacy and lobbying with the key stakeholders in the Mica supply chain had not been very visible. The team gathered that there are efforts to promote a viable CSO network and providing a formal shape to Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP) to ensure “ Mica supply chain free from child labour” across all levels. It was also noted that all the project partners are part of nationwide ‘childline network 1098 services’, present as members at district level Child Welfare Committees(CWCs)in their respective districts, well connected with state level and national level child protection institutional services. Furthermore, the project uses the term “rescue” more in the context of removal/preventive of child labour from activities of Mica collection and enrolling dropouts to schools rather than how it is legally understood in the Child labour context under the Child and Adolescents Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 or Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015. The project needs to relate with the juvenile justice system concerning child labour interventions of rescue or rehabilitation as understood within the juvenile justice system.

³³ It refers to Global Mica Committee (a conglomeration of NGOs working for the cause of children in Mica mining areas) and the the upcoming Multi Stakeholder Platform (a forum linked to Mica supply chain such as representation of law makers, policy makers, private sector and CSO network)-effectuate policy level changes in making Mica supply chain free of child labour and potentially resuming Mica as gainful activity (as it used to be previously before the imposition of formal ban on Mica mining) through promulgating relevant laws.

4.3 COVID-19 Response :

The Humanitarian response reached the 2,669 most vulnerable families in Mica mining areas during the first phase of the nationwide lockdown for 40 days. The response was designed and rolled out with the participation of village-level institutions, active involvement of Anganwadi workers, PRIs, and Government authorities. The support included a dry ration kit to ensure availability of food for 14 days to 1,177 families and comprehensive protection from infection for 60 days to 2,669 families through a 'Safety and Hygiene kit' for 2,669 families were provided. The distribution of relief items was done in absolute harmony and peace, thanks to the presence of TdH-NL and its partners in the Mica region. In addition, intensive information dissemination on safety and hygiene practices was conducted through wall writings and loudspeaker announcements.

The evaluation team noted the impact of COVID-19 responses as follows:

1. No one from the project operational areas got infected.
2. Increased level of awareness and adaptation of key safety and hygiene practices.
3. Support for dry ration kits ensured the availability of food for the most vulnerable children and their families for the first 14 days.
4. Increased outreach of the Government relief operation due to coordination with authorities, time response with the most comprehensive composition of relief kits (designed as per Sphere standards).
5. Efforts on timely response were found effective and were recognized by the district administration.
6. Helped in improved linkages with the Government authorities and increased overall access to social welfare /social protection schemes.
7. NGO partners in both the districts became the lead members in the CSO network for strategic operation and management of COVID-19 relief operations and rolling out rehabilitation schemes.



4.4 :Case stories and Testimonials:

The evaluation team gathered case stories and testimonials as evidence to record the changes in the lives of children and their families from the sample villages. An example of the case story and the testimonial is briefly described as under:

General information:

Name: Vikas Vishwakarma

Age: 13 years (7th standard)

Location: Kishtand, Block: Tisri,

District- Giridih (Jharkhand)

Vikas Vishwakarma is a 13-year-old boy studying in class 7 in a Government Upper Middle School near his village. Vikas was engaged in the Mica collection along with his parents to meet the day-to-day basic needs of the family. He was very much interested to go to school but could not regularly due to family needs. Vikas says, "I used to be very unhappy by not being able to go to school, play and learn with other friends". The project staff (Mrs. Sharmila Kumari) conducted a meeting with the children and discussed the project and the support for children to continue education. Ms. Sharmila facilitates the constitution of Balmanch in our village, helped to learn many new things all of us, and guided us to establish Balmanch. Vikas says, "I enjoy being one of the leading members of Balmanch and share and learn from other children". Vikas mentioned that the project also discussed with my parents and helped them to strengthen goat rearing. He is now regular to studies for the past 2 years and encouraged other children to become regular to school. Mr. Ram Prasad (father of Vikas) says, "My entire family was dependent on Mica for survival, though I did not intend to engage Vikas with us there was no other option". Mr. Ram Prasad is very thankful to TdH- NL for the support and providing them an opportunity to continue their education and lead a better life. Vikas is not engaged in the Mica collection for the past 2 years.

Vikas is now a happy school-going child. He is associated with the Balmanch as a lead member of the education committee' and enjoys monitoring the fellow students attending school. During COVID-19 lockdown, Vikas has been very active to identify the children in need of study materials and helping Balmanch to provide the list of 25 children to the project, organized effective functioning of digital learning facilities, and facilitated children to attend online academic sessions. Vikas aspires to pursue higher studies and become a medical doctor. Vikas says, 'I wish to cure people of the diseases by serving poor persons'. Vikas says, "I am very thankful to TdH-NL and wish all the best for their mission for children like us".

4.4 SWOT Analysis

The evaluation team used a participatory approach to administer \ SWOT analysis of the overall accomplishment of the project. The exercise was conducted in the field office of NGO partners with the participation of all project staff and Balmanch children.³⁴ The exercise also aimed to include the aspect of a children-led project appraisal in the purview of the envisaged role of children in the project. The project staff members and the Balmanch children were divided into groups to discuss the project objectives in the format of a SWOT analysis to gather information about the extent and quality of services delivered by the project with respect to its stated objectives.

³⁴ 38 Balmanch children (Boys- 20, Girls-18) representing 18 villages participated in the SWOT analysis exercises at 2 field locations (Koderma and Giridih)

Objective 1: Children are empowered to address the issues of child protection in Mica mining areas:

During the SWOT analysis, the respondents shared that the biggest strength contributing to objective 1 had been Balmanch in every village. Balmanch had been instrumental to bring all children of a village on one platform and developed a culture of participation, peer sharing and learning, collective approaches to identify and address any issues with the children. The weakness had been the initial reluctance of the parents to allow their children to join Balmanch and invest time as the rampant poverty had subjected all family members to remain confined in addressing survival needs. However, project staff members continued to persuade and convince the parents to allow their children to join Balmanch as a platform to share and learn with their peers. The Balmanch provided children with several opportunities to develop their personalities, team spirit, and leadership skills. The training and capacity-building workshops helped the children to learn skills like interpersonal communication, problem-solving, decision making, etc. Their active participation in Balmanch proceedings helped the children to gain confidence and increased their self-esteem. Balmanch played a pivotal role in addressing the protection concerns/issues and preventing/reporting the cases of child labour and the risk of child marriages. Balmanch children were found very confident to take forward the gained momentum through continuing the practice of peer sharing and learning, handholding support from senior members to junior members in coordination with village-level institutions (VLPCs and SMCs). Thanks to TdH-NL³⁵ for the training, guidance, and ensuring the availability of a trained person³⁵ to seek advice in the eventuality of needs in future times. area.



Increased access education (Right to Education):

The respondents maintained that the increase in enrolment of students at school and AWC level is a definite strength. Similarly, strengthening of the School Management Committee (SMC), decrease in dropout of students, and decline in absenteeism is also indicative of the strong influence of the project intervention. However, inconsistent participation of parents as representatives in the SMC meetings is the weakness to uphold/gradual improvement in the quality of educational services. The respondents shared that creating a child-friendly learning environment in Anganwadi centers and schools, promotion of home-based ECE activities, the functioning of the mobile library, and improved coordination between Balmanch and SMC are the contributory factors for increased trends in the continuation of education with special mention of girls moving beyond upper primary level of education. However, inadequate strength of teachers and insufficient infrastructures remain an area of concern for the realization of the Right to Education(RtE) as per the mandate.



³⁵ It refers to 'Community Education Worker' - the project staff who belongs to the same village as part of long term strategy to ensure availability of skillful person in the villages after conclusion of the project.

Objective 2: Parents, communities and institutional mechanisms support children's access to education:

The income generation activities (IGA) are one of the most successful components of the project. The respondents shared that the project's decision to promote community-driven IGA is one of its biggest strengths. The supplementary income generated by these activities has made the community more self-reliant. The low cost of investment appropriate to the absorbing capacities of the families is one of the strengths of this initiative. However, not organizing regular skill-building training with respect to the preferred IGA was seen as a weakness of the intervention. IGA led to unfold many opportunities to pursue socio-economic development activities. The additional income in the family helped them become less dependent on their children's income. This translated into a significant increase in school enrolment, a significant decrease in dropout rates, and encouraging signs for intent among girls to complete 10 years of schooling. The mandatory signing of Sapath patra by the beneficiaries made them morally bound to protect the interests of the children. In addition, increased level of awareness among parents about the education of children, improved functioning of SMCs, and improved coordination among Balmanch, SMC and (Village level Child Protection Committee) VLCPC are notable strengths. However, respondents were concerned that the majority of IGA supported families do not adhere to the schedule for repayment and that could be a cause of distrust as other families will not be able to undertake their IGA activities as per their plan.



Objective 3: Engage with the Jharkhand State Government to enforce relevant laws and improve access to relevant social welfare schemes:

During the SWOT Analysis, the respondents shared that making the community aware of the various government welfare schemes and facilitating them to access have been the biggest strength. However, there is a felt need to emphasize more on this aspect to ensure communities remain well informed about the latest schemes and revisions in the existing schemes. The financial benefits of the social schemes have helped to alleviate poverty in the intervention areas to some extent. The pension and scholarship schemes have benefited both old and young people. However, increased levels of dependency of the community on the project staff due to the latest trend of accessing the schemes through digital modes, and preparing necessary eligibility documents remain an area of concern though beyond the defined limits³⁶ of the project.



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Government has initiated establishment of Common Facilitation Centers (CFCs) to ensure enhanced outreach of social welfare/social protection schemes and accelerate the development process. But unfortunately the Mica areas and those at the upstream end of Mica supply chain are yet to be covered with widespread establishment of CFCs.

5.LESSONS LEARNT AND GOOD PRACTICES

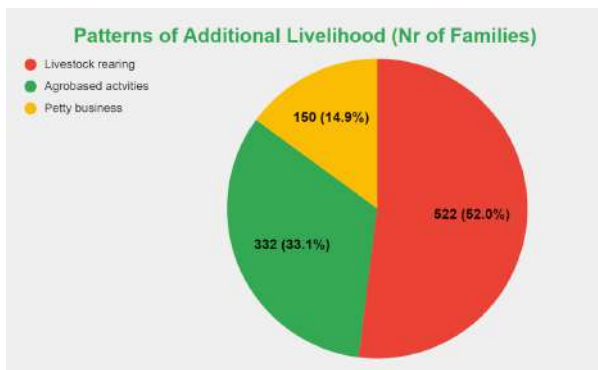
5.1. Balmanch

Balmanch (children's forum) is one of the most successful strategies of the project. During the implementation period, the project has been successful in constituting Balmanch in all 42 villages with the participation of approx 1,800 children and facilitating them to develop necessary skills and procedures for effective functioning through training and activity-based learnings. The child-centric approach of the intervention is clearly reflected in the Balmanch which aligns with objective 1. The Balmanch ensured child participation at the lowest level of operations. Child awareness and child empowerment are 2 interlinked ideologies brought to the fore by the Balmanch. These forums managed to achieve the following:

- Brought all the affected and vulnerable children under one umbrella and thus forming a collective consciousness regarding their rights.
- Gave the children a platform where they could raise their concerns without fear.
- Provided opportunity for training and awareness activities for children and dissemination in communities.
- Transformed children into an army of well-trained and aware volunteers. Their role was especially commendable during the COVID-19 related interventions. They were also influential in mobilizing children and families for enrolment in school.
- They influenced families to stop their children from Mica picking and other related work.
- Played a big role in reporting and stopping child marriages.
- Encouraging peer learning by conducting/assisting remedial classes for younger children.
- Influenced community members to uphold child rights.
- Increased community-level accountability by collectively demanding a better life for themselves and their peers.



5.2. IGA component linked to community led economic empowerment:



The project constituted self-help groups/farmers clubs and gradually facilitated them to select the most vulnerable families as the first recipient of IGA support with a precondition that they would be bound to repay back the support in a scheduled manner to accumulate a revolving fund. The revolving fund would be recycled among other families as per the established procedures and the process would continue in the future. The project facilitated the families to select the preferred choices of IGA based on their skills, gainful, and market-linked opportunities. Based on the report and interaction with the families in the sample villages, the model of community-led economic empowerment through provisioning, promotion through training and facilitation, and participation through developing interdependence among multiple SHGs /Farmer's clubs has emerged as one of the most effective practices. Key observations are as follows:

- Almost all families were very happy to undertake their own preferred additional livelihood option.
- Financial inclusion for all the families - own individual bank accounts.
- More than 80% committed to repaying back the IGA support.
- The emerging trend of the federation (the conglomeration of SHGs/Farmer's club) in respective project locations in different stages.

Income Generation Activities along with implementation procedures have been observed as one of the most effective practices for economic empowerment of the most vulnerable families. The Mica mining areas do not provide enough opportunities for income generation opportunities due to socio-political and geo-climatic factors. It is important to note that the entire Mica region is rainfed, mono cropped and before the formal ban, Mica mining was the backbone of the economy. But efforts to promote alternative livelihoods in conformity with the existing agro-geo-climatic conditions have been inadequate. In addition, low levels of literacy, accessibility, and influence of left-wing extremist activities pushed back the socio-economic well-being. The complex relationship between poverty and child labour formed the basis for adopting an appropriate project strategy. It was understood that the issue of child labour could be addressed only by enhancing family income through promoting activities incommensurate with the socio-cultural appropriateness, available skills, viable, gainful, and market-linked income generation activities. It was also important to empower these families both at the individual and collective level through the promotion of self-help groups, commanding their own funds and financial inclusion.



5.3 Involvement of Women in various project components.

There is a group in every village which is called “Mothers Committee-Mata Samiti” under the aegis of the Department of Social Welfare (Government of Jharkhand). The project staff members (Community Education Workers-CEWs) activated the group. Each committee consists of 7-12 members. All members are the mothers whose children are enrolled in the Anganwadi center. CEWs facilitated regularity in meetings of this group under the stewardship of Anganwadi workers. The project staff members made them aware of their specific roles and responsibilities for effective functioning. These Mothers Committees in coordination with Anganwadi workers and Auxiliary Nursing Midwifery (ANM) have been playing a significant role in the promotion of nutrition practices, improved access to antenatal and postnatal care services, and immunization of children. The evaluation team noticed the widespread practice of homestead nutrition gardens by families with children (under 5 years) and pregnant women.



5.4 Home based ECE:

Mothers/caregivers are facilitated to adopt ‘child/user-friendly practices’ that contribute to sustained age-specific learning and development of young children (3-11 years ago) in their respective homes. Mothers are trained to learn the approach and methods to conduct and create joyful learning activities for young children at home with exclusive use of available materials/ resources; to imbibe creativity, keeping them engaged and preparing them to become better learners at formal preschool learning centers. Home-based ECE has been playing a significant role in keeping children joyfully engaged during the closure of Anganwadi centers due to COVID-19 lockdown. The ongoing Mica project extensively promoted home-based ECE to upkeep the age-specific learning and development of young children. 1,450 families have been reported to have adopted home-based ECE practices and continue to ensure joyful learning for 3,215 children (Boys - 1,650 & Girls - 1,565) in 42 villages. The evaluation team also observed the practice of ‘productive use of waste materials to conduct a range of ECE’ for young children and noted it as one of the most significant and effective practices to keep young children joyfully engaged. The utility of home-based ECE practices assumed a center stage during COVID-19 lockdown through its wide acceptance among mother /caretakers. It has enabled them to keep their young children in a good space of age-specific learning, joyful engagement and to enhance the effectiveness of institutional services in the future.



5.5 Mobile Library :

Mobile libraries across all 42 villages were found as one of the significant strategies towards creating and promoting a conducive learning environment at the community level for children. It helped the children to grow together and learn together through peer learning and sharing. The mobile library was found equipped with a range of reading materials³⁷ for self-awareness and personal development in addition to their routine academics. The study observed that the mobile libraries immensely benefited children by providing increased opportunities for sharing and learning. Mobile libraries in the sample villages were found well operated and managed by the Balmanch members. It was also noted that on-demand of Balmanch children, these mobile libraries were also supplemented with academic³⁸ materials to minimize the negative impact of COVID-19 on learning due to the closure of schools since April 2020. The team got very positive feedback from children about the utility of contents in the mobile library and the majority of the children expressed that additional materials have been very helpful for them and they are confident to perform very well at the upcoming board examinations.



5.6 Community level digital learning facilities for children:

The project introduced the concept of digital learning for the children living in Mica mining areas, one of the most remote geographic regions. It was introduced in 30 villages with required digital accessories along with one portable projector to extend the benefits for a group of 25-30 children. It was the most exciting part for children, parents, PRIs, and school teachers. Balmanch was very happy to assume the responsibilities for proper operation and maintenance. The place was decided through consensus among children, parents, PRIs, and school authorities to ensure safety and ease in access to all children. The evaluation team observed that children were very happy to learn on computers and accessing the academic contents in digital mode. The project staff members provided digital academic content (a downloaded version of online academic sessions for specific standards in accordance with the course curriculum in the state of Jharkhand) to each learning center. It was also noted that 24/30 learning centers are located in school buildings and the school authorities were very happy to accommodate the facilities and the mobile library in the school premises itself. The evaluation team while interacting with Balmanch, took a special note on this initiative as children expressed that the digital learning facilities in their communities have been of immense benefit and proved very helpful in keeping them at par while they interact with children from urban areas. Further during COVID-19 lockdown, these learning facilities were used in 4 sessions by children studying in 6 to 9th standard.

5.7 Local Camp Office

The project has set up a field office to provide overall coordination and support to the NGO partners for effective and efficient delivery of the project. The evaluation team observed that the field-level office equipped with TdH-NL staff members was a significant strategic decision. It proved its worth by successfully implementing a comprehensive project with a range of intensive children-centered, community-led approaches along with the aspects of coordination and linkage among multiple stakeholders.

The presence of TdH-NL staff members was of immense value in providing easy access to techno-managerial support for partners and monitoring the quality assurance of project deliverables. The evaluation team noticed the easy accessibility of TdH-NL staff members to the children/project staff members underlined a great sense of happiness and motivation among them. The presence of staff in the field has impacted the sustained quality assurance by way of providing quick and timely solutions to any problems/difficulties in implementation.

³⁷ Inspirational stories, discoveries/inventions, biographies of great personalities, social and cultural awareness, information about the world, own country and Jharkhand and general knowledge.

³⁸ Dictionaries (English to Hindi, Hindi to English) and Grammar books (English, Hindi, Sanskrit)

6.CONCLUSION

The endline evaluation focused on the following aspects of this project

A.Project design

The project design was comprehensive and holistic in its approach. The program design had a life cycle approach where children and family strengthening was targeted through various components.

- Promotion of household nutrition gardens and working with Anganwadi had a direct benefit on the early childhood aspects of survival, development, and education.
- Balmanch has successfully and meaningfully engaged children, empowered them through participatory processes, and has led to many children being encouraged to join back to schools.
- Engaging the whole family through Mata Samiti and IGA and ensuring home-based ECE with the active involvement of both the parents was not only unique but has a long-term sustainability aspect to it. Once the family realizes the benefits of child centricity in their life and acts upon it – there cannot be a better behavior change indicator.
- The IGA with 'Shapath Patra' was another way of self-declaration / realization towards parents' own duty vis-à-vis their own children – which has led to better enrolment and retention in schools.
- IGA strengthened the families economically, ensured child rights induction through 'Sapath Patra', and had an overall impact on children's wellbeing at home, school, and the community at large.
- The activities creating linkages with the social welfare and social protection schemes through awareness and facilitation support have resulted in an increasing trend to access the facilities and accruing benefits to many individuals and families.



B.Implementation processe

- The project implementation was planned as a consortium of 3 NGO partners which pooled a mix of field experiences and technical expertise in the successful implementation of such a comprehensive project. TdH-NL anchored the role of extending technical support to the project with close monitoring and handholding of the partners.
- All partners had well-defined procedures in place, with a system of monthly review and planning for each individual team member on the 25th of every month. Partners had evolved a system of day-wise activity planning plans for individual team members.
- The partners were submitting regular monthly progress reports. The partners submitted quarterly reports along with qualitative aspects (case stories/good practices and other information) as per the mutually agreed time schedule to TdH-NL.

C. Performance of the project

As already shared in the findings chapter on most of the indicators the project has outperformed its target and quantitative data speaks about the achievements of tangible project targets.

- The project was planned for a project cycle of 3 years (2018-2020) and logically many of the activities related to advocacy were kept for the final year based on the successes of the first two years. A few larger consultations and government engagements based on evidence from the ground targeted to be undertaken in 2020, but could not be done due to COVID-19 restrictions.
 - All targets proposed until March 2020 were successfully achieved before the nationwide lockdown.
 - The new targets and activities planned after the Covid pandemic was after March 2020; which was the first opportunity of its kind to engage with the community and support them in the crisis situation.
 - Adjustment and realignment of planned activities post COVID-19, through time-bound relief activities and then undertaking proactive measures to minimize the negative impacts of COVID-19.
1. Intensive efforts for sustained academic engagement of children through study material support, augmenting the effective functioning of mobile libraries through academic supplements, and ensuring sustained functioning of digital learning facilities.
 2. Creation of mini Anganwadi centers (home-based ECE).
 3. Engaging Balmanch consultations in small groups - uphold the peer learning and sharing and promoting the culture of study in small groups.
 4. Motivating the parents to support the children in attending makeshift private tuition/coaching centers.
- Increased coordination and linkages with authorities - access to social welfare /social protection schemes and leveraging of resources (rehabilitation of livelihoods under specific COVID-19 schemes). In addition, it was also helpful to ensure maximum outreach of post-COVID-19 Government relief and rehabilitation activities.
 - The efforts of NGO partners were visible and acknowledged by the district administration.



D. Organisational management systems and its impact on project implementation

- The project management was well structured keeping the comprehensive and intense nature of project activities. One Community Education Worker (CEW) was responsible for implementing the project activities in each village and this staff belonged to the same village to ensure good rapport between children, families, communities, and PRIs. It was heartening to note the adaptability skills of these staff members as per the demand of the project thanks to the continued guidance and support from NGO partners and TdH-NL staff.
- CEWs were supervised by Community organizers (CO) who had supervisory responsibilities. The CO's were supported by a Project Coordinator and a Livelihood coordinator. The whole team worked under the supervision of the Project Director for each of the NGO partners.
- On the part of the TdH-NL side, the entire project team consisting of 3 NGO partners was provided regular handholding support to ensure timely completion and quality assurance of the activities. The staff members conducted capacity-building activities on various aspects and equipped the team with necessary procedures and guidelines.

E. Quality assurance of project deliverables

- All the partners had a very good monitoring system to ensure smooth implementation of project activities. Each NGO partner had created a WhatsApp group to share, learn and remain updated about the day-to-day progress of the activities.
- At the overall project level, a WhatsApp group was created with the inclusion of all management, supervisory staff members, and the TdH-NL team responsible for coordination and management of the project. This WhatsApp group ensured sharing and learning among all 3 partners and strategic updates.
- TdH-NL staff members undertook regular monitoring visits to the field to assess the progress, provide hands-on training and quality assurance aspects of the project activities delivered. In addition, TdH-NL commissioned annual audits, organized annual outcome harvesting festivals, and deputed an external agency to undertake a mid-term review (MTR).
- Overall the project was implemented in the spirit of partnership across all stages. TdH-NL played a critical role of a friend, philosopher, and guide.

Furthermore, the evaluation team also noticed that the recommendations of MTR are still to be fully accommodated, as the majority of them could not be taken up due to COVID-19 restrictions. This includes the following:

- The IGA portfolio needs to be further strengthened by including the key aspects of microfinance to grow in a more professional manner (generate—>manage—>grow) and ensure accountability of the families in terms of discipline in repayment and recycling of the revolving fund.
- Advocacy with the government – all the suggestions are critical for TdH and such projects. While partners delivered the field expectations, their positioning in the districts could have pushed for larger advocacy.
- The work at Anganwadi and schools are path-breaking interventions and the Government must be informed about such innovative works.
- Regarding partners and partnerships – TdH has been working very closely with the partners and with the existence of a camp office their involvement is deep. Expanding program activity to include interventions on health, youth, etc are strategic decisions worth consideration.



Based on the criteria of evaluation

- **Relevance: Whether the project has done the right things?** The Tdh-NL Theory of Change puts the focus on the child and the family. Under the given circumstances, the cause and effect relationship between the increase in child labour and the limited employment opportunities for the adult family members has been clearly established. The project initiative on income generation activities has reaped dividends. The IGAs were proposed and finalized by the community members. This was helpful in ensuring that the type of activity adopted by the family would not be abandoned by them midway. The support ranged from INR 5,000 to 15,000 depending upon the nature and intent of the livelihood option opted and the consent of SHGs/Farmer's club. The IGAs multiplied the family income considerably. The proposed IGA beneficiaries had to sign a sapath patra (or declaration /promise note) assuring that their child/children would not work in Mica mining activities. The sapath patra also made the family accountable for the enrolment and continuation of their children's education. Thus, by making the family financially sound, the project was able to make them more responsible for the well-being of their children. The program too had a say in the well-being of the children as it had invested money for the parents with the child's safety as a promise.



- **Coherence: How well does the project fit**
The intervention has left only positive impacts on the community. There is literally no adverse impact of the project on the children, family, and community. However, . However, the current political setup ruling the state claims to identify themselves to prioritizing human rights over industrial growth but needs to implement at field level'. Hence there is a need for sustained advocacy efforts for the cause of the vulnerable population living in Mica mining areas.
- **Effectiveness: Has the project achieved its objectives?** *The project has created a lot of institutional processes in the community. The child-centric life cycle approach and strategy have been extremely successful in the programme. The project targeted the children (3-18 years) in both districts with age-specific involvement and learning. The project mainstreamed the child rights narrative at the centerstage across all interventions. At the end of the 3 years of the project cycle, one can easily observe the shift in the attitudes and perception of the community; collective awareness of the need for child rights and child protection clubbed with the willingness to work toward making the lives of their children safe, secured and wholesome. The Mica programme aimed at ensuring that the children working in Mica mining activities/Mica supply chain are removed from the exploitative conditions and empowered to access their rights on a sustained basis. The project also strived to build collective responsibility in the community towards their children. The evaluation team noted that the main focus of the project as a right to development and the child rights-centric approach was well reflected directly across all interventions.*

Efficiency: How well were the resources used?

- The project design was beneficiary-centric. Engagement of children, family, and community in almost all activities of the project ensured maximum utilization of resources around the beneficiary. Even the CEW was appointed from the community thereby ensuring that trained persons (by use of project resources) continue to remain in the community even after the conclusion of the project to keep the gained momentum in motion. For three years the project has implemented all activities within the time frame until the outbreak of COVID-19 in March'2020. A few activities (such as organizing consultations/workshops at district and state levels on child protection issues) could not take place due to COVID-19 restrictions. The COVID-19 humanitarian response was found efficient as it helped the vulnerable families at the most critical time (2nd week of 1st lockdown) and facilitated project partners for leveraging more resources on relief and rehabilitation from the district administration. Furthermore, all project partners worked in cohesion underlining the spirit of collaboration for a common cause. The presence of TdH-NL staff members at the field location to coordinate and extend techno-managerial support was instrumental in the overall efficient operation of the project.

Impact: What effect has the project created?

The TdH-NL intervention in the 42 mica-rich villages of Koderma and Giridih is quite a successful intervention in the field of child rights. This project has been successful in raising the issues of child exploitation in the Mica mines with a child-centric bottom-up approach. The intervention at the village level with intensive work with the children and the community ensured that the children, their families, community members, and service providers at local & district levels are empowered to take accountability for the safety and protection of the children. The awareness generated on child rights and direct action like rescue and rehabilitation of victims of child labour and child marriage initiated dialogue and build public consensus on the issues of child protection.

The intensive work with the children has paid off. The children are now more aware of their own wellbeing, their rights, and also the rights of other children. Balmanch has been successful in empowering children with knowledge of their rights and life skills to help them forge their way ahead towards a better future. Balmanch(approx 2,500) were found well on the course of assuming the role of agents of change' for their community. Children are no longer silent recipients of societal expectations. There is enough evidence that rescued children continuing their education and a positive trend of encouraging girls to complete 10 years of schooling could be termed as the most significant impact.

The parallel intervention with schools and SMC ensured their graduation and empowerment. Every child enrolled and attending school is a step towards ridding the community from the bane of child labour. However, the schools and the learning process had to be made attractive to the children who till now were 'employed people with incomes'. The interactive remedial classes, digital education, and school modeling activities ensured that children not only attended but also continued to be regular in school.

Community Education Worker (CEW) has now become the point person for mobilizing the families for enrolment in schools and Anganwadi centers. This is a positive shift where the same set of people used to be the recipient of the service delivery system. The training and empowerment of the CEW on child safety and protection issues along with making Anganwadi centers more child-friendly had a great impact on education, nutrition, and protection of children.

Sustainability: Will the project outcomes last after conclusion of the project?

The project had created enabling conditions for all the actors (children, families, communities, and institutional mechanisms) both at the individual level and collectively as well as through coordination and collaboration to sustain the gained outcomes in future times. Brief details could be summarised as under:

- **The emergence of vibrant Balmanch across all the villages** and huge intent of peer learning and sharing: It shall upkeep the education as the top priority for all children, self-development, a collective approach, and skills to liaise with protection mechanisms to raise/address the protection concerns and child right issues.
- **The community-led economic empowerment process:** Across all 42 villages there are emerging trends of vibrant SHGs /Farmer's clubs to work collectively to ensure increased family income on a sustained basis and helping each other through generating, managing, and growing a revolving fund to address their needs. These SHGs /Farmers clubs are in advanced stages of financial inclusion and interlinked with each other.
- **Increased coordination and linkages between communities and authorities** - It would keep the families to approach and prepare themselves to access relevant social welfare/social protection schemes thanks to the intense engagement of PRIs and Anganwadi workers (responsible to roll out all mainstream socio-economic development schemes).
- **Enhanced capacities of institutional mechanisms:** SMCs and VLCPCs are well trained and have already demonstrated their coordination with Balmanch in enrollment, readmission of dropouts, awareness on child rights/protection issues and prevented prevalence of early marriage of girls in their villages.



7. RECOMMENDATION

The project on the Elimination of the worst forms of child labour in the Mica mining belt of Jharkhand, India' had been a relevant and needs-based project. There is no doubt that the project has positively impacted the lives of children, their families and the communities of 42 villages. However, it will have its own limitations.

The following are key recommendations based on the achievements of the current project spanning three years 2018-2020;

1. **Remaining Confined** – the partners did deliver what was expected at the grassroots village level and did a level of work with the district administration on issues of access to social security schemes the partners remained confined to the villages for their activities. The work remained focused on children and families previously or presently engaged with the Mica collection. The Mica industry has a chain of activities where collection/segregation remain at the base. The partners with influence at the district could have moved beyond the confines of the village interventions.
2. **Advocacy towards Legalisation of Mica mining** – Though Mica mining in Jharkhand and Bihar is banned for more than 15 years it continues informally. The children and their families suffer the most living the upstream of Mica supply chain as they do not have access to other livelihood options. Furthermore, while exploring more in the communities, it was gathered that the selling price of Mica for people (who toil hard to collect by using hand tools) has remained the same for the past 10 years. The informal trade means there is a complete lack of regulations and thereby more exploitative conditions. The project needs to consider being part of a larger advocacy call for legalisation of Mica Mining in Jharkhand. It would ensure regularisation of the whole process that renders the “Mica supply chain free from child labour” and enable the Mica dependent families to access fair market price commensurate with earning their livelihood in dignified ways.
3. **Sapath Patra' with Mica contractors** – while the effort to enhance the livelihood options and source of income through IGA has been successful, that in itself has not been able to sustain the family needs and dependence on Mica collection and segregation is still visible in the village. The project may engage through community groups with the Mica contractors who are the purchasers of the segregated Mica for the enhanced price. A little increase in the family income may keep the children out of labour.
4. **Revolving Fund** – The whole IGA support was a critical component and had an impact on the whole programme as it involved and gave access to the family on issues of child rights and eventually economically strengthened the families. However, one of the aspects of the IGA was to ensure that the support led to the accumulation of a revolving fund by repaying back to the respective SHG/Farmer's club. There is a need to strengthen the overall process of generating, managing and growing the revolving fund through collective efforts from all the families in the respective SHG/Farmer's club to expand the outreach of the revolving fund.
5. **Targeted approach** – the partners' focus has been on a limited number of families in the villages who were beneficiary of the IGA. It was quite visible that other families were not part of the larger discussion and even unaware of the exact benefits. Somewhere this created a mental limitation on other aspects too such as ensuring access to social security schemes. Hence it is recommended that the project should conduct village-level mass meetings at frequent intervals with the participation of PRIs to consolidate overall community empowerment processes.
6. **Village-based Community Planning** – the 42 intervention villages selected for the project were all in need of intervention and the project reached its intended target population. However, it is recommended to associate the annual action plan of the project for the particular village with the annual village development plan under the stewardship of PRIs. This would render value addition to the overall development plan, helping PRIs to include children's needs and priorities in their annual plan of action, more recognition of the project and the increased visibility in mainstream development process.



terre des hommes 
stops child exploitation