

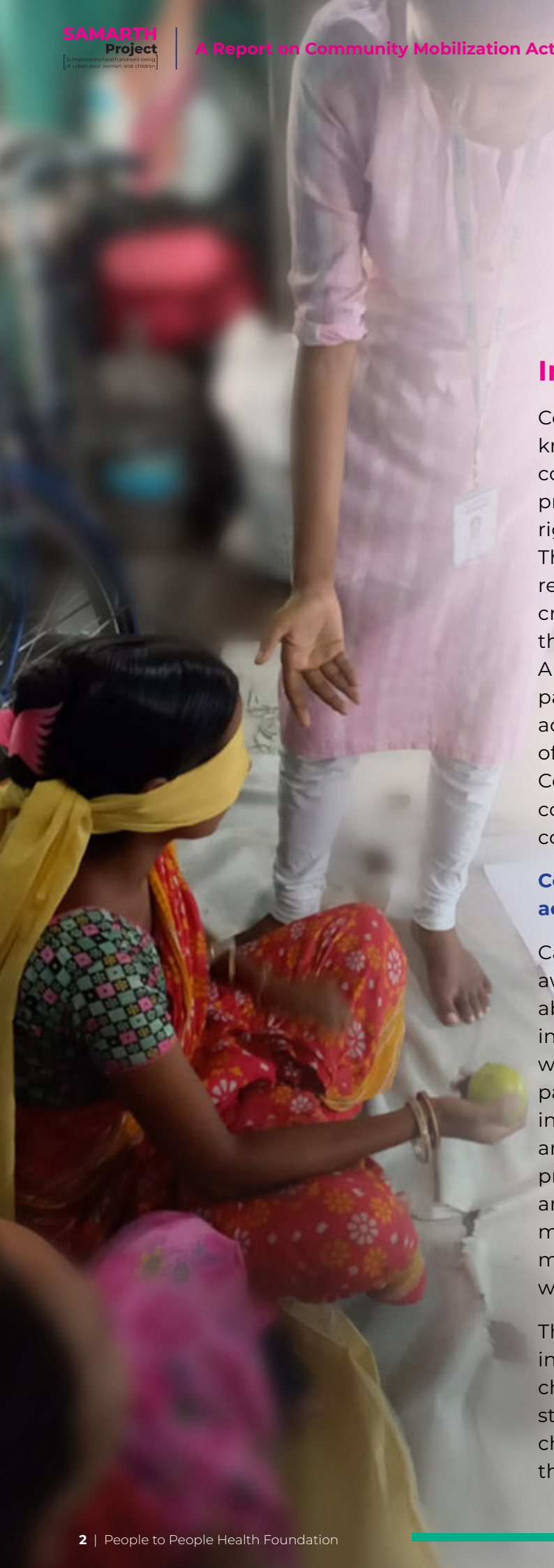


A REPORT ON
Community Mobilization Activities

**SAMARTH
Project**

[To Improve the health and well-being
of urban poor women and children]

April to December 2022



Introduction

Community mobilization is an awareness and knowledge-building process through which the community, individuals, and specific groups are provided with appropriate knowledge and the right information through participatory processes. This capacity building process enables them to respond to and meet their day-to-day health and cross-cutting needs, either on their own or by their own initiative which is supported by others. A lot can be achieved when people from different parts of the community share a common goal and actively participate in both identifying the needs of the community and being part of the solution. Community mobilization helps to empower communities and enable them to initiate and control their own development.

Community mobilization through campaign activity

Campaigning is a communication process of raising awareness that seeks to inform and educate people about specific topics or issues with the intention of influencing their attitudes, behaviours and beliefs which influences their day-to-day actions on some particular issues and its allied behaviours. It can influence the power of looking at some issues with an alternate angle, influencing the positive thought process and finally taking positive decisions. There are multiple awareness-raising strategies and methods that can be used to convey and spread messages to mobilize the target community as a whole.

The major tasks to be undertaken by a campaign include (1) choosing the target audience (2) choosing information/ messages dissemination strategy; (3) choosing an area or places and (4) choosing the campaign method (5) reach out to the target groups under a well defined plan

Campaigns undertaken under SAMARTH Project till Dec 2022

Menstrual Hygiene Campaign to empower girls and women:

Globally, more than half of women are currently of reproductive age—and menstruation is a normal monthly physical process for the women. Yet all around the world, many women, due to the lack of right information and knowledge to access to menstrual hygiene products or sanitation facilities, either due to limited availability or excessive cost, suffer from socially regressive practices, myths and as a consequence face several reproductive health problems. Myths and stigma surrounding menstruation cause some women and girls to miss school or work or go into isolation. Women and men of all ages must be made aware of the importance of menstrual hygiene through an open dialogue and education at home and in school to foster engagement with this often-unspoken issue. Menstruation continues to be a subject of gender disparity in India. Myths about menstruation are largely prevalent, forcing many girls to drop out of school early or be ostracised for the duration of their menstrual cycle every month.

Several menstrual hygiene campaigns were launched across the country in connection with the recent observance of World Menstrual Hygiene Day to promote the concept of Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) among adolescent girls and women in reproductive age group in urban segments. Slums, often the residence of migrants and urban poor, are underserved areas with poor housing,

insufficient living space, scarcity of basic infrastructure, and services such as useable water, drainage and electricity, and poor access to toilets and sanitation services. Urban poverty and life in slums significantly compromise the ability of women and girls to effectively manage menstruation. There are many factors that affect how women manage their monthly periods, such as the lack of information and awareness on menstruation- the cross-cutting factors of health and hygiene and infection etc. Considering these challenges faced during menstruation, the awareness camp was organized in Ward 32 with 80 members from the target group of women within the reproductive age. Menstrual hygiene, myths and some traditional beliefs on menstruation were discussed with immediate actions points. The practice of hand washing and steps of correct wash practices were demonstrated by field mobilizers. The community arranged the space and utensils to conduct the sessions. Hand washing kits were distributed as part of the project as a symbolic item on WASH to promote messages around the significance of maintaining WASH and personal hygiene during the menstruation period. The emphasis was on caring and preventing the diseases and infections in the reproductive tract known as Reproductive Tract Infection (RTI). Sanitary napkins were distributed from Kolkata Municipal Corporation where the SAMARTH Project was a part of those activities. Awareness messages were disseminated jointly with KMC health workers to create awareness and sensitize the entire population in that locality.



Campaign on the celebration of World Breastfeeding Week

The development sector including stakeholders from the government celebrate World Breastfeeding Week every year across the world from August 1 — August 7. Breastfeeding is recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) until a child turns at least two years. The World Breastfeeding Week campaign was organised and facilitated under the scope of SAMARTH Project in KMC Ward-32 to promote breastfeeding by the mothers and to create enabling environment in the family to get family support.

World Breastfeeding Week (WBW), observed from August 1-7, 2022, was aimed at encouraging breastfeeding and protecting the health of the mothers and the babies. The theme for World Breastfeeding Week 2022 was “Step Up for Breastfeeding: “Educate and Support,” to raise breastfeeding awareness through propagating the value of breastfeeding and elevate it to the

level of a public health obligation by encouraging the different stakeholders and the communities to develop measures to safeguard breastfeeding. A street play was organized to celebrate World Breastfeeding Week for creating awareness among the target beneficiaries and their family members. In the congested slum like Basanti Colony in Ward 32, the street play became an effective tool for mass awareness. The key objective was to raise awareness on exclusive breastfeeding, awareness on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices, negative impact of early marriage and teenage pregnancy and raising awareness on health and hygiene practices. The event was very popular within the community and it was facilitated in campaign mode. A total **909 people (175 men, 420 women and 314 mothers of the children)** were reached through this program. To understand the impact of the program, a quiz session was done at the end of each show. The winners were felicitated with a token of hygiene kit.



Campaign of Prevention of Dengue-Tableau campaign

Dengue fever is categorized as one of the most serious and dangerous viral diseases which was spreading in Kolkata, and could cause death if it is not prevented at mass scale. Affected patients are not diagnosed at early stages to start the treatment at public health facilities. The KMC Health Department also issued an advisory on Dengue Management. KMC deployed trained health workers from the vector control wing for dengue-prone areas and in the slum lanes to prevent the spreading of the dreaded disease. The government planned and executed various strategies to help and solve, or at least reduce the number of dengue fever cases, especially the critical ones that could lead to death. Despite that, there was a major gap in awareness of the community to take the health issues seriously for preventing and managing dengue. Since, pregnant women and mothers in the SAMARTH Project locality were most vulnerable during this spread of the viral disease, a special drive was taken up by SAMARTH Project in collaboration with the KMC team and the local administration. An awareness campaign was initiated under the project to educate the community on the serious consequences of the disease and how to avoid and prevent it before it spreads in the community. By the end of November, the daily infection rate significantly came down in the state. The positivity rate had reached up to 18 percent at the beginning of November but the situation improved in the latter half of the

month. The said campaign was facilitated from 28 October- 2 November 2022.

Through the campaign, the community tracked specific information about anyone who knew that he/she had dengue, and spread awareness about how to avoid getting further mosquito bites during the first week of illness. The campaign emphasised on how the virus may be circulating in the blood during this time, and therefore anyone could may transmit the virus to new uninfected mosquitoes, who may in turn infect other people.

The overall six days campaign was very successful. Altogether a tableau, a short drama and the dissemination of specific messages through the use of mikes and other medium was very successful. We found that people were attentive and seriously watching and listening to the campaign. The campaign was appreciated by the community and the local administration and they appealed for message dissemination frequently and regularly within the community for continuity at action points at individual, at house hold and at community level. The campaign reached approximately 46,000 population in all age groups which targeted the mothers and children including their caregivers and family members, adolescent and young age groups and all in other age groups. The whole campaign was accomplished as per the plan which was developed in close collaboration with KMC ward teams. Each activity was monitored and guided closely by the KMC team members.



Campaign on World Pneumonia Day through Street Plays

Every year, World Pneumonia Day is observed on November 12. This day came into effect in the year 2009 to raise awareness regarding the complications and issues related to pneumonia. Malnourished children, particularly those with severe acute malnutrition, have a higher risk of death from common childhood illnesses such as diarrhoea, pneumonia and malaria. Nutrition-related factors contribute to about 45% of deaths in children under 5 years of age. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the rate of severity is more in children less than 5 years of age. Therefore, precautions need to be taken to prevent the disease at an early stage. The surge in COVID-19 related pneumonia cases in recent times is expected to add significantly to the total number of deaths due to pneumonia. Hence, with this background, a street play was organized

covering the Ward 32 for three days (November 23 to November 25, 2022) to spread awareness on key factors of childhood pneumonia and how it could be prevented before the condition gets worst. To understand the impact of the subject line, a quiz session was facilitated at the end of each show. The winners were felicitated with a kit with a towel, socks, and hand-washing soap as token of motivation to follow and practice the ideal behaviours.

Family members have a significant supportive role in addition to the mother who will be able to understand the following preventive measures for Pneumonia. They can identify the signs and symptoms of Pneumonia and the importance of Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) further on getting the information from where they will get this service. We reached total **928 participants (Male 205, Female 723)** audience through this mass campaign done by street play.



COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION THROUGH GROUP SESSION:

Group session on growth monitoring to assess nutritional status

Growth Monitoring (GM) is an operational strategy for the promotion of health, which enables mothers to visualize growth in colour coding and understand the nutritional status of the children. The aim of all growth monitoring activities is to achieve behavioural changes in the mother in respect to child feeding, an appropriate response to illness and an understanding of the various factors which influence the growth and development of a child. The broad objectives of this type of activities were:

- to detect early growth faltering
- to promote optimal growth through effective nutrition and health education
- to create awareness about growth amongst mothers of children
- to enhance the delivery of primary health care intervention; and
- to identify those 'at risk' with respect to

malnutrition and to provide appropriate care and services to them on time

Basanti slum is a densely populated locality in KMC ward 32. We conducted a screening camp for growth monitoring and MUAC measurement exercise for children and screened their nutritional status. The screening camp was initiated as a drive mode to understand the present status. The detailed plan was shared with KMC and the Directorate of ICDS. The community growth chart is prepared to provide information on the visual record of nutrition and health of the child. They mobilize mothers to come with their children at nearby Anganwadi Centres. The field mobilizers and Anganwadi workers were jointly involve in the weighing process and while counselling of the mothers on the importance of growth monitoring to understand the nutritional status of their children and to decide the further action points for their children's health.



Group session on Food Groups and diversified diet

We celebrated National Nutrition Week (September 1 to September 7, 2022) through awareness generation sessions with mothers under 5 children and adolescent girls. The sessions were conducted by demonstrating methods of food groups. The mothers were oriented on basic food groups according to WHO specification. The nutritional advantages of locally available fruits and vegetables and other food items were discussed and then the blindfold game was played by the participants to understand their knowledge level and to ensure their participation in the event. The winner of the game was encouraged by a token gift from the food basket. Each food basket comprised of raw vegetables, pulses & grain, and fruits following the Minimum Dietary Diversity (MDD) indicator as defined by WHO. The mothers

identified any one item and elaborated its nutritive value. The mothers who could answer correctly, got food basket as a token gift. The mothers' meetings were scheduled jointly with ICDS at Anganwadi centres (AWCs). The revision concerned adding "breast milk" as an eighth food group. This ensured dietary diversity with the diet containing five or more of the following food groups:

- Breast milk;
- Grains, roots and tubers;
- Legumes and nuts;
- Dairy products (milk, yogurt, cheese);
- Flesh foods (meat, fish, poultry, liver or other organs);
- Eggs;
- Vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables; and
- Other fruits and vegetables.



Group session on Home Based Diarrhoea Management (July-2022)

Diarrhoea is a major cause of morbidity and mortality in children. Most deaths are caused by dehydration and are easily preventable by using oral rehydration therapy. Early management and recognition of danger signs are key strategies in treating diarrhoeal diseases at home. During the rainy season, drinking water sources get contaminated easily and the occurrence of diarrhoea gets increased. Mothers were oriented on ORS preparation and the importance of the consumption of Zinc tablets through the demonstration process from July 23 to July 30, 2022. This counselling session helped build up the knowledge and health-care-seeking behaviour of families regarding diarrhoeal illness in children aged under five years. 200gms lentils were distributed among the mothers and educated on the importance of food-based fluids (such as soup, rice water, dal water and yoghurt drinks), and plain water.



Group session on Advantages of breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding (August 2022)

At least 20 awareness meetings were arranged with pregnant and lactating mothers. 7 meetings were done jointly with ICDS. A video show was arranged to disseminate the messages on early initiation of breast feeding, importance of exclusive breastfeeding, myths related to breastfeeding, initiation of complementary food timely, care during pregnancy and lactation period. The detailed plan of activity was shared to ICDS and KMC to ensure their participants. Soyabeans packets were distributed and discussed about potential nutritive value of it.



Group session on prevention of Pneumonia and home- based management of Pneumonia (November and December-2022)

Parents are considered to be the primary caregiver of a child. It is important for parents to have knowledge regarding pneumonia, its first sign and symptoms etc. Mothers are responsible to give the first milk i.e. colostrum to improve the child's immune system. It is necessary to aware the caregivers on prevention of pneumonia and its home based management. Total 10 group sessions with 161 caregivers were organized and facilitated. Mothers were oriented on how to use and how to read thermometers to measure fever and also discussed on the importance of using thermometer to measure fever. An in-depth discussion was held on why measuring body temperature is so important and on what occasions and how frequently it should be measured.



Topic	Total Number of Group Session	Total Participants	Methods followed	Materials distributed	Nutritional importance
Home-Based Diarrhoea Management	20	410	Group discussion, lecture followed by demonstration on ORS preparation. Open discussion in observation under the Service Care Provider and Field Mobilizer followed by Quiz competition	Lentils (Masoor dal)	Easily digestible Good source of protein and micronutrient. It helps in the absorption of excess fluid from the intestines and reduces the frequency of motion
Advantages of breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding	20	400	Video show Discussion Quiz	Germ protection kit for winner Soyabean and Hand washing soap	Soyabean are high in protein and a decent source of both carbs and fat. They are a rich source of various vitamins, minerals, and beneficial plant compounds, such as isoflavones.
Diversified diet and minimizing the nutrient loss	12	327	Demonstration, Blindfold game, Cooking demonstration and competition	Food items from "Food Basket" Cheak Peas/ Bengal gram(Chola)	It is a complete protein, contains nine essential amino acids. Sprout form is the richest source of protein. Excellent source of vitamin A, C, E. Manage the diabetes due to its blood sugar regulating effects. Good source of iron, which help to prevent from iron deficiency Anaemia
Growth monitoring	20	400	Demonstration of community growth chart and individual growth chart	Peanut Chikki	The peanuts were used as an example of nutrition rich and low cost food item. Low cost food items from other food groups were also discussed
Prevention of pneumonia and home-based management of pneumonia	10	161	Demonstration and hand hold practices on using of thermometer		

ABOUT PPHF

PPHF is a non-profit organisation that works towards transforming lives for improved health and wellbeing through locally- driven solutions.

PPHF works closely with communities and key actors on sustainable solutions for public health challenges. These include :

1. Women, Adolescent and Child health
2. Non-Communicable Diseases
3. Nutrition
4. Infectious diseases- T.B, Malaria, COVID-19
5. Environmental Health

We focus on building public health capacity and community actions for better health outcomes. We work collaboratively with stakeholders, leveraging partnerships and influencing policies and practices.

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