

Burans Blossoms: The Spring Edition

APR 19, 2024

Thinking Aloud Allowed

March is a special month for Burans because the rhododendrons flower across the hillsides where we work in Yamuna valley and across the state of Uttarakhand. Spring! There is inspiring blossom in the community too.

We celebrated Women's Day across all our communities, especially in Yamuna valley on March 8th. Applauding the ways women lead, innovate, work and create is key to building resilient communities. Our work with women in small groups is a really great way to build new friendships and increase women's confidence to speak out and take collective action.



Two years ago, we worked to identify strengths and assets for community mental health, and have recently published another study titled ‘Inverting the

deficit model in global mental health: An examination of strengths and assets of community mental health care in Ghana, India, Occupied Palestinian territories, and South Africa.

This paper tips upside down the common concept of communities having no resources or initiative in mental health: Read this blog and our visual abstract for a short summary on the paper:

[Inverting the deficit model in global mental health | Feature from King's College London \(kcl.ac.uk\)](#)

Thanks for your interest in Burans and our work. This year we will celebrate ten years since Burans started—a great achievement through the many people supported us in the communities of Dehradun and the Yamuna valley, through funders who believed in us and through supporters, colleagues, academics, research collaborators and people with lived experience guiding us! We will update soon on celebrations we plan for 2024!

With thanks to all,

Kaaren and the Burans team

Farewell to our beloved Project Officer of Selaqui, Laxman Balan Yakub Masih, Selaqui



With a mix of gratitude and sadness we gathered to bid farewell to Mr. Laxman Balan (AKS HOPE Project), who has dedicated an incredible 10 years of service to our team at Burans Selaqui. AKS HOPE project has been in partnership with Burans from the beginning of the project and was privileged to work towards promoting mental health through awareness programs and celebrating key events like World Mental Health Day and Suicide Prevention Day.

Laxman Sir not only led by example but has also mentored us with patience, compassion, and wisdom. Mrs. Kiran Sharma, Mrs. Geeta Shakya, Mrs. Mamta Bhandari, and the rest of our team have had the privilege of working closely with him over the years, and his impact on our professional and personal lives has been profound.

He was a dedicated leader who focused on our team's growth and development in different aspects of work by providing training sessions, offering knowledge and skills from his expertise during field visits. He taught us to write meaningful reports and encouraged technical upskilling. Sir has been a guiding pillar to our team during challenging times. His counsel on family issues has provided comfort and guidance to many of us.

We bid farewell to Mr. Balan, with a heavy heart but also with deep gratitude for his years of dedicated service and unwavering support—despite his turbulent personal circumstances he made a positive impact and inspire those around him. We wish him all the best in his future endeavours and pray for his continued success and happiness.

Thank you, Laxman Sir for everything. You will be dearly missed in the office and it was a privilege knowing and working with you.



Celebrating Women's Empowerment: The International Women's Day Program 2024

Manoj Singh



Achievements Celebrated:-

Women from diverse backgrounds came together to celebrate Women's Day with creative activities, including a sports competition, at an event promoted by journalists. Women stepped out of their homes to participate actively, sharing their experiences and learnings with enthusiasm.

Burans HCH project organized Women's Day celebrations in various villages in Naugaon and Purola blocks to showcase the importance of engagement, cultural celebration, and community involvement in women's well-being and development. The programs, tailored to skills and interests of the participants embraced local culture with enthusiasm.

Ahead of Women's Day, Burans discussed with women in the villages, the significance of the day and solicited ideas for celebration. Activities included drama on domestic violence, sharing sessions, street plays on drug awareness, folk songs, dances, and games with prizes won. The spirit of women's empowerment echoed through the valleys of Barkot and Naugaon as communities together celebrated International Women's Day. Under the Rural

Development Group, 268 women participated in this two-day programme, showcasing talents, resilience, and achievements of women, demonstrating their significant contributions to society.

International Women's Day reminds us of all of the pivotal role women in shaping our world- as a wife, mother, daughter, sister or friend. Its global platform advocates for gender equality, women's rights, and social justice, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society where every woman's voice is heard and respected.

Key Events of the Programme

- Women from various groups, including from Nai Umeed, self-help groups, ASHA, and Anganwadi workers) participated actively.
- Sportsmanship and fun in competitions like 'Tug of War'.
- The captivating speech by Rajni Devi from Rajgari village, earning her first prize in the speech competition.
- The dazzling dances and cultural performances by women from Bakhereti and Khamandi which won them the top spot.

Organization of the Program ;

The Rural Development Group, gave meticulous leadership or stage management and Swarna Rekha and Ruchi, adorned with the hats of referees, ensured smooth and fair play

We also gratefully recognised for their invaluable contributions to community development and welfare the women from Asha, Anganwadi, and self-help groups of Naugaon block.

Community Mental Health Dissemination Event

Jeet Bahadur



We need to spread abroad the news of Mental Health Research. Dr Sumeet, Researcher, University of Edinburgh, did this on February 22nd in Dehradun and 26th in Yamuna Valley. He shared insights from two groundbreaking papers on community mental health, heard by 53 participants at the event in Hotel Aketa in Dehradun and 92 participants in hotel Rautela in Yamuna Valley.

- In The first paper, Key findings emphasized contextual knowledge, relationship-building, and tailored interventions. Community workers highlighted the positive impact of programs like 'Nae Disha' and 'Parwarish,' for resilience and family.
- The second paper – 'Improving mental ill-health with psychosocial group interventions in South Asia' explored the efficacy of group interventions in low-income countries. It revealed the benefits of group participation in fostering trust, inclusion, and collective strength.

Group discussions emphasized the significance of community interventions in addressing sensitive issues like addiction and cyber security. ASHA workers pledged support for improved mental health outreach and advocated for further studies on poverty, unemployment, and maternal well-being.

Mental Health Professionals acknowledged the vital role of community workers and proposed inclusion in patient case histories for better understanding and capacity-building initiatives. The event demonstrated the power of collaborative efforts in advancing community mental health, paving the way for holistic and effective interventions.