

Essar Foundation joins hands with CINI to launch Aanchal, a comprehensive project for empowering adolescent girls

Durgapur, Dec 28, 2013: Essar Foundation along with Child in Need Institute (CINI), a leading Non Government Organization (NGO), which is active in the areas of Health, Nutrition, Education, Protection and Environment, today launched Project Aanchal to improve the health quotient of women in the region.

Project Aanchal has been launched after undertaking an extensive study in the region, which has mapped the health and nutrition quotient of women, particularly adolescent ones. Burdwan, in spite of being the country's seventh most populous district and an important economic hub of the state, has fared discouragingly in social development indicators, especially in the rural areas. The district has fairly high incidence of maternal mortality and infanticide. Besides, occurrence of malnutrition among children, anemia among women, low birth weight and low child survival rates in the district are alarming.

Considering these indicators, Essar Foundation, with the support of the Project Facilitation Committee under the Chairmanship of SDO- Durgapur and Block Officials as members, initiated concerted action towards improving the status of maternal and child health in the area, centering on adolescent girls. The programme was conceptualized after conducting a pilot awareness program in 22 villages of four Gram Panchayats in Durgapur – Faridpur and Kanksa administrative blocks. About 2,250 participants including pregnant women, nursing, expecting women, adolescent girls, and village health functionaries like ANM, ASHA workers and Anganwadi workers attended the awareness program. To blend in strong technical expertise and community development experience into the program, Essar Foundation has joined hands with distinguished national level non-governmental organization Child in Need Institute (CINI) for implementation and facilitation.

This focused program for empowering adolescent girls towards improved maternal and child health and aims to reach out to communities of 32 villages over a period of two years ending 2015. It is an elaborate and intensive program that will base upon rigorous engagement with the stakeholders and convergence with the government, community-based institutions and youth

leaders. By the end of the program, it is expected that there will be significant reduction in the infant and child mortality, maternal mortality, and enhanced overall awareness and reproductive health status of women and adolescent girls.

Community members, health officials at Block PHC, ICDS officials as well as at the key officials at district level have welcomed the program whole-heartedly.

NOTE TO EDITOR:

About CINI:

Child in Need Institute (CINI), a leading Non Government Organization (NGO) with its head office in Kolkata, India, was founded in 1974. Under the governance of esteemed pediatrician and Founder Director Dr. Samir Chaudhuri, we have been operating for the last 40 years in some of the poorest communities in the states of West Bengal, Jharkhand and Chattisgarh. Our core activities are in the areas of Health, Nutrition, Education, Protection and Environment. We reach out to over five million people both directly and indirectly. Our mission is – *'Sustainable development in health, nutrition, education and protection of child, adolescent and woman in need.'* CINI has won the National award for Child Welfare from Government of India twice, once in 1985 and then in 2004.

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About Essar:

Essar is a multinational corporation with investments in the sectors of Steel, Energy (Oil & Gas and Power), Infrastructure (Ports, Projects & Concessions) and Services (Shipping, Telecom, Realty and Outsourcing and Technology Solutions). With operations in more than 25 countries across five continents, Essar employs over 73,000 people and has revenues of US\$ 39 billion.

Essar Foundation being the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) arm of the Essar mirrors the philosophy of the business while imbining the Four Ps as the soul to its body of work.

PEOPLE at the core (human development centered holistic development)

PROGRESS towards aspirations (fueling individual learning, innovation and entrepreneurial spirit)

POWER of synergy (collective strength of responsible partnerships towards sustainable development)

PASSION with compassion (inclusive and participatory approach; creating ownership)

This philosophy anchors the panorama of its initiatives, and gives shape and direction to an overarching strategy addressing the social, economic, and environmental development of the areas under CSR. Under this umbrella the objectives of its initiatives are led by the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals and the ten principles of United Nations Global Compact. In essence, the endeavors aim at sustainable development, encompassing a range of well-planned initiatives around health, education, livelihoods, skill development, infrastructure and environment. Essar Foundation has, through its development interventions, impacted more than half a million people across eight states of the country and aims to keep touching more lives progressively.

Essar Foundation at Raniganj area of Burdwan district, West Bengal has engaged actively in the development of the communities around CBM operations of Essar Oil, and has its sustained presence in more than 25 villages of Durgapur–Faridpur and Kanksa blocks. The interventions here primarily focus on three core areas -- Health, Education and Livelihood, and base upon robust partnerships with the local administration and civil society partners. The flagship program on making health services accessible has reached out to benefit more than 75,000 rural people via special mobile medical units. Supplementary education support, school adoption program and many such initiatives in education have touched more than 17,000 children. Employability skills, vocational skills and entrepreneurship development initiatives have been initiated targeting 400 rural youth, women and adolescent girls towards self-dependence.