

# Burans Bulletin



A quarterly newsletter of Project Burans,  
working with communities for mental health in Uttarakhand

## MESSAGE FROM PROJECT DIRECTOR, DR KAAREN MATHIAS

Monsoon, and instead of splashing red rhododendron flowers, we're in the splashing of heavy rain and lushness of monsoon. This is another challenge for lots of people with mental distress – getting out the door to attend group session or see a doctor is harder in the rain. Yet rain or no rain, we're really happy that we're getting many positive stories of individuals and families who are doing well, accessing care, and for quite a number, also holding down employment and attending school with the support of anti-seizure and other medicines.

Much of our focus in the last few months has been in 'Train The Trainer' workshops with our capacity building funding from the Australian government. We have trained our staff and teams, for example, on how to teach community leaders how to effectively access government entitlements and how to use the Right to Information Act (2005), a powerful tool to advocate for change in communities. Another focus has been in training the government health (ASHA) workers in the simple identification of mental disorders. So far, we have provided training to over 180 ASHA workers through our implementing partners.

So we're glad to start on our second year of implementation of Burans – and grateful for many people partnering with us, to make a difference for many people.

## MENTAL HEALTH FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE SLUMS



Burans project has been clear that as well as increasing access to care for people with mental disorders, we are keen to also build protective factors for mental health and work "upstream". Our Youth Burans initiative that started in May 2015 seeks exactly to do this. Led by implementing partner Sneha's team leader: Saroj Daniel, it focusses on building resilience among youth in the slums of Dehradun. Her team of four community workers has made a great start in building relationships in Purani Basti and Gandhi Gram.

Over 100 12 - 16 year girls who have dropped out of school have enrolled in our Nae Disha Youth Resilience Programme and will participate in the weekly groups over the next four months to build their skills in communication, identify their strengths, build their planning skills and have fun. At the end of the course, girls will work in pairs to identify a community issue they want to change, and implement a plan to work on this. These will be presented to the community building on ideas around youth citizenship and Design for Change developed by Kiran Sethi and others (<http://www.dfcworld.com/>). We have a research arm in this work to assess the change in self-efficacy, understandings of gender equality and other resilience measures in young people. We'll update you when we have analysed the pre- and post- data among these young people.

In the afternoons, the Youth Burans team will continue our work in government schools among year 8 and 9 students, using the framework of Corstone, used last year, which is also being implemented by all our teams at each project site.

**110**

Number of slum resident girls dropped out of school & now enrolled in Nae Disha, our 16-week course in youth resilience

**17**

Number of training days for Burans team members thus far in 2015

**115**

Number of ASHA workers in Dehradun district

## Support Burans

We need YOUR help with funding, graphic design for resources, interns for project development, teaching, and capacity building.

Please write to [kaaren@eha-health.org](mailto:kaaren@eha-health.org) to find out more about how you can be involved!



## COMMUNITY PROFILE

### INTRODUCING ROHIT LAL\*



**Dr Kaaren, Jeet (Burans Field Coordinator) & Laxman (Community Worker) talking with a community member**

Rohit Lal is a 60 year old man who has lived with bi-polar disorder over the last 20 years. He lives in Mussoorie with his wife and two of their adult children. Sangeetha has been the main breadwinner for the family during this time, working as a domestic maid. "Once we met the Burans team, we were so happy to find that there was care to be found in our own town. We had given up years ago on travelling several hours to expensive care in Dehradun. The trouble was that with the new medicines, Rohit was sleeping in later and then we were hitting difficulties in how to care for him. I have to be out the door by 7am each morning."

Rohit's son chipped in "Actually, we are quite happy with these medicines as my father is very much calmer and he can still go out all day and meet friends and have chai at different places. Once Dr Swetha (EHA psychiatrist) told us we could take the medicines earlier in the evening, then it was all fine. Dad could still wake up at 6 am and go out by 7am."

Rohit and his family are finding things easier with the support of regular visits and accessible compassionate care. Thanks Kamla and Shalini (Mussoorie Burans team members) for your regular visits to Rohit and family!

**\*Name changed to protect privacy of patient and family.**

## COMING AND GOING

In May 2015 as well as starting with our new Youth Burans team mentioned on Page 1, we also had new community volunteers - **Grameen Sanchalak** starting in OPEN, HOPE and LCH Burans teams. They're a great asset to our work.

From 1 July 2015, the Mussoorie Burans team has come under the umbrella of the Coordination office. Our implementing partner LCH regrettably withdrew from the Burans partnership due to stretched human resources but we will continue working closely to support them in their work in mental health and disability in Mussoorie and Tehri Garwhal.

In August 2015, we were very happy to have **Samson Rana** join us in the Burans coordination office as project assistant. Samson comes from Dehradun and has a background in Hindi translation and also has trained in accounting areas. He will provide most of the office administration and support. From August 2015, we also welcome **Abigail Smith**, a professional counsellor who is an NRI returning to work and serve in India - she will be working as a part-time volunteer with Burans. Further, **Yomri Dabi** is a social worker and community health intern who is with us for August and September from SOCHARA.

## Our New Website

We are very proud of our newly launched website for [www.eha-health.org](http://www.eha-health.org) tab PROJECT BURANS

Thank you to volunteer I-Hsin Yang for website design and maintenance. All developed resources are available for download here, including our new flipchart resource - Being Mentally Healthy in the Community.

