



# Calcutta Kids

## Annual Report

### 2024

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**CALCUTTA  
KIDS**

Healthy mothers. Healthy children. Families that thrive.

# Letter from the Directors



Our staff and their families at a Calcutta Kids picnic in December 2024

Dear friends of Calcutta Kids,

Here's a truth we've known for some time: community health workers are the heroes of Calcutta Kids. They earn our beneficiaries' trust, get to know their families, and provide them with life-saving counseling, education, and care.

In that spirit, we're thrilled to share that we have promoted four community health workers to the leadership team. Calcutta Kids has benefited from the knowledge, ingenuity, and compassion of these women for many years: Laxmi (19 years), Munni (16 years), Neelam (11 years), and Tulika (7 years). This promotion is a recognition of their expertise and commitment to the work. It's also a vote of confidence that they can provide strategic leadership to the organization and guide the team as managers and decision-makers.

In Fakir Bagan, it isn't common to see women in positions of leadership or power. During our visit in December, we spent time paving the way for the culture shift we want to see as Laxmi, Munni, Neelam, and Tulika step into their new roles. This meant helping the staff see that these women now have the authority to make decisions — and helping the women themselves see that too.

Each one has a vision for how to make our work more effective, and each shared what this promotion means to them.



Laxmi, who will oversee data interpretation and implementation, said, “I want to ensure that things are always updated and kept modern at CK.” Meanwhile, Tulika wants to focus on skill-building for community health workers: “I want the team to make their counseling techniques more personal and not just take it as completing a task, so that even more beneficiaries reach out to CK for any support they need.” Munni and Neelam described how this promotion feels like a huge milestone in their lives and careers. They feel proud to apply what they have learned at Calcutta Kids to their home lives, and they hope to inspire their children.

We’re eager to see all that Laxmi, Munni, Neelam, and Tulika will do as leaders. Their real-world experience is priceless, and no one is better suited to strengthen and sustain the organization. Please join us in welcoming them to the leadership team!

With gratitude,

Evangeline Ambat & Noah Levinson  
Co-Directors, Calcutta Kids

# Key Indicators

Our [Maternal Health Program](#) and [Child Health Program](#) (also known as the Maternal and Young Child Health Initiative or MYCHI) provides women and children with essential health and counseling services.

These services are critical to:

- Reduce maternal morbidity and mortality
- Empower women with knowledge and skills to help themselves and their families thrive
- Reduce child morbidity and mortality
- Improve birth weights
- Ensure normal growth among children from birth to 3 years old (the window when 80% of brain development occurs)

## Beneficiaries served in 2024

- Children **870** (including **193** new enrollments in 2024)
- Pregnant women **216**
- Adolescent girls **40**

## Key indicators in 2024

- Community health worker visits (virtual and in-person) **23,804**
- Medical consultations (virtual and in-person) **4,437**
- Children with up-to-date immunizations **90%**
- Children with severe malnutrition **3.4%**
- Children with moderate malnutrition **14%**
- Babies born **145**
- Babies born with normal birth weights **84%**
- Hospital births **98.5%**



# Achievements

For the last 20 years, our services have contributed to a dramatic drop in child malnutrition and rise in child immunizations, birth weight, and safe hospital births. These gains are our crowning achievements, and we are driven to sustain them.

In addition to the key indicator outcomes, here are a few notable achievements from 2024.

## Women in leadership

Four seasoned Calcutta Kids community health workers are taking on leadership roles essential to our core services.

- **Clinic and staff management:**  
Neelam, Laxmi, and Munni will oversee the clinic, which includes managing and training staff, implementing and refining clinical processes, ensuring medical equipment and systems are effective and up-to-date, and coordinating and managing the doctors and clinic activities like growth monitoring and promotion, immunizations, and the nutrition unit.
- **Database management and operations:**  
Tulika and Laxmi will train community health workers and clinical staff on database protocols, assess and troubleshoot data entry challenges, collaborate with the database operator on system fixes, and pilot initiatives to improve database operations. They will also strategize ways to use data more effectively to inform our work moving forward.



The new members of our leadership team (from left to right): Tulika Chakraborty, Munni Das, Neelam Prajapati, and Laxmi Gupta

“ I feel like I am climbing up the stairs of achievements slowly. I started as a health worker, then became a senior health worker, and now I’m in a leadership position. I’m very proud to be in this leadership position after just passing 9<sup>th</sup> class.

– *Munni*

We are currently researching management courses and certifications that would give Laxmi, Munni, Neelam, and Tulika more tools to bring to their new roles.

## Calcutta Kids as a safe haven

We have become a safe place for beneficiaries when they feel like they have nowhere else to go. Our ability to help beneficiaries in difficult situations is a testament to our organization.

- **Beneficiaries see Calcutta Kids staff as trusted adults.** Beneficiaries know that we will handle sensitive information with care and compassion.
- **We have strong relationships with local institutions, like hospitals and the police department.** Police take cases more seriously when Calcutta Kids is involved.

Last year, an adolescent girl in our Ashayein program shared difficult news with a Calcutta Kids community health worker: the girl's stepfather was physically abusing her. Her mother knew it was happening but felt too embarrassed and scared to report it; her husband had abused her too, and she couldn't accept the failure of her second marriage. At the girl's request, the health worker went with her to the local police, where she lodged a formal complaint. The stepfather was arrested and released on bail with a restraining order.

Even though the stepfather is no longer a physical threat, the young girl continues to grapple with stress and weight loss related to the abuse. Calcutta Kids is providing her with meals and mental and emotional support to get her life back on track. She is very grateful to the Calcutta Kids 'didis' for advocating for her and bringing her justice.



Adolescent girls in our Ashayein program

## Mothers' confidence in treating diarrhea

Babies and children in Fakir Bagan are particularly vulnerable to diarrhea, which can cause serious illness, growth impairment, and death. But oral rehydration solution (ORS) is an easy-to-use, effective diarrhea treatment. Calcutta Kids has an ORS unit in our clinic, and for many years we have done extensive ORS training with mothers on how and when to use ORS.

Calcutta Kids staff reported that, in the last year, the number of mothers coming to the clinic's ORS unit have drastically declined — even as requests for ORS have increased. Our community health workers note this as a sign our training has worked; many mothers now feel confident they can identify when their child needs ORS and prepare the ORS themselves at home.

## Support during village births

It's common for pregnant women in Fakir Bagan to return to their maternal home in their village to give birth and get family support after delivery. In the past, these women would miss out on critical Calcutta Kids support; they would often come back six months later with a malnourished baby.

Now, our community health workers routinely educate pregnant women before they leave for the village and talk to their families about how to support the mother and baby's health. We also prepare a file with information the mother and her village delivery team will need, including blood test results. These efforts have led to stronger communication between village hospitals and Calcutta Kids and, ultimately, better outcomes for mothers and babies.

## Food variety in the nutrition corner

For a long time, we have offered khichdi — a nutritious lentil and rice stew — in the Calcutta Kids nutrition corner, a unit within our clinic. This food is a key source of nutrients for malnourished children, pregnant women, and some adolescent girls in the community.

The nutrition corner also helps beneficiaries learn about cooking different types of nutritious meals. With that in mind, we recently began serving a different menu of food each day, each with the same amount of nutrients.



A mother feeding her child food from our nutrition corner

# Challenges

Historically, Calcutta Kids has administered and covered the cost of child immunizations for all of our beneficiaries, a hugely valuable benefit for families and the community at large. This was possible because of the low cost and widespread availability of the vaccines.

That changed last year, when the Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP) added new vaccines to its child immunization schedule and the cost to fully immunize a child grew ten-fold. While this update aimed to prevent even more diseases, it's now cost-prohibitive for organizations like ours to achieve full immunization.

In an effort to maintain our track record of child immunizations, we have partnered with the Indian government: they administer the new, expensive vaccines to our beneficiaries while we continue to administer the original vaccines and help get families to the government clinics.



As promised, we still provide beneficiaries all of the vaccines we were providing before the immunization schedule changed. Unfortunately, there has been an insufficient supply of the new vaccines that the government provides our beneficiaries. Families may wait in line for a long time at the government clinic only to be told that the vaccines are not available. They may return two or three times and still leave without getting vaccinated.

We are waiting to see how the situation evolves over the next few months. It's possible that extreme costs and supply issues will lead the government to scale back its changes to the immunization schedule; it's also possible the vaccine supply will improve. In April, we expect to have the data we need to decide on next steps.



# Financial Stewardship

## The value of each donation

Calcutta Kids is funded entirely through the generosity of individual donors. We know you have many, many philanthropies knocking on your door, and we take seriously our responsibility to extract the most value out of your financial support.

**All services that Calcutta Kids provides are completely free for beneficiaries.**

Thank you for your support. We couldn't do it without you.

To make a donation to Calcutta Kids, please visit <https://www.calcuttakids.org/donate/>.

## Budget and financials

<b>Total budget</b>	<b>\$150,818</b>
Program operations (field team, clinic, medical supplies, training, and consultation)	\$116,560
Program administration, oversight, fundraising, and travel	\$34,258



# Board of Directors

We appreciate the dedication and contributions of our Board and Advisory Committee members.

## India Board

The India Board provides programmatic support and oversees financial and administrative operations.

John Ambat (Trustee)  
Kalyan Kumar Roy (Managing Trustee)  
Sudipta Sinha Roy (Trustee)  
Sriya Srikrishnan (Trustee)

## U.S. Board

The U.S. Board primarily supports fundraising efforts and provides high-level public health and nutrition expertise.

Evangeline Ambat (Co-Director)  
Alan Berg  
James Levinson  
Noah Levinson (Co-Director)  
Pranav Reddy

## Advisory committee

The Advisory Committee provides high-level expertise on public health and nutrition.

Denish Moorthy  
Jon Rohde

For details about our Board and Advisory Committee members, please visit <https://www.calcuttakids.org/board/>.



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