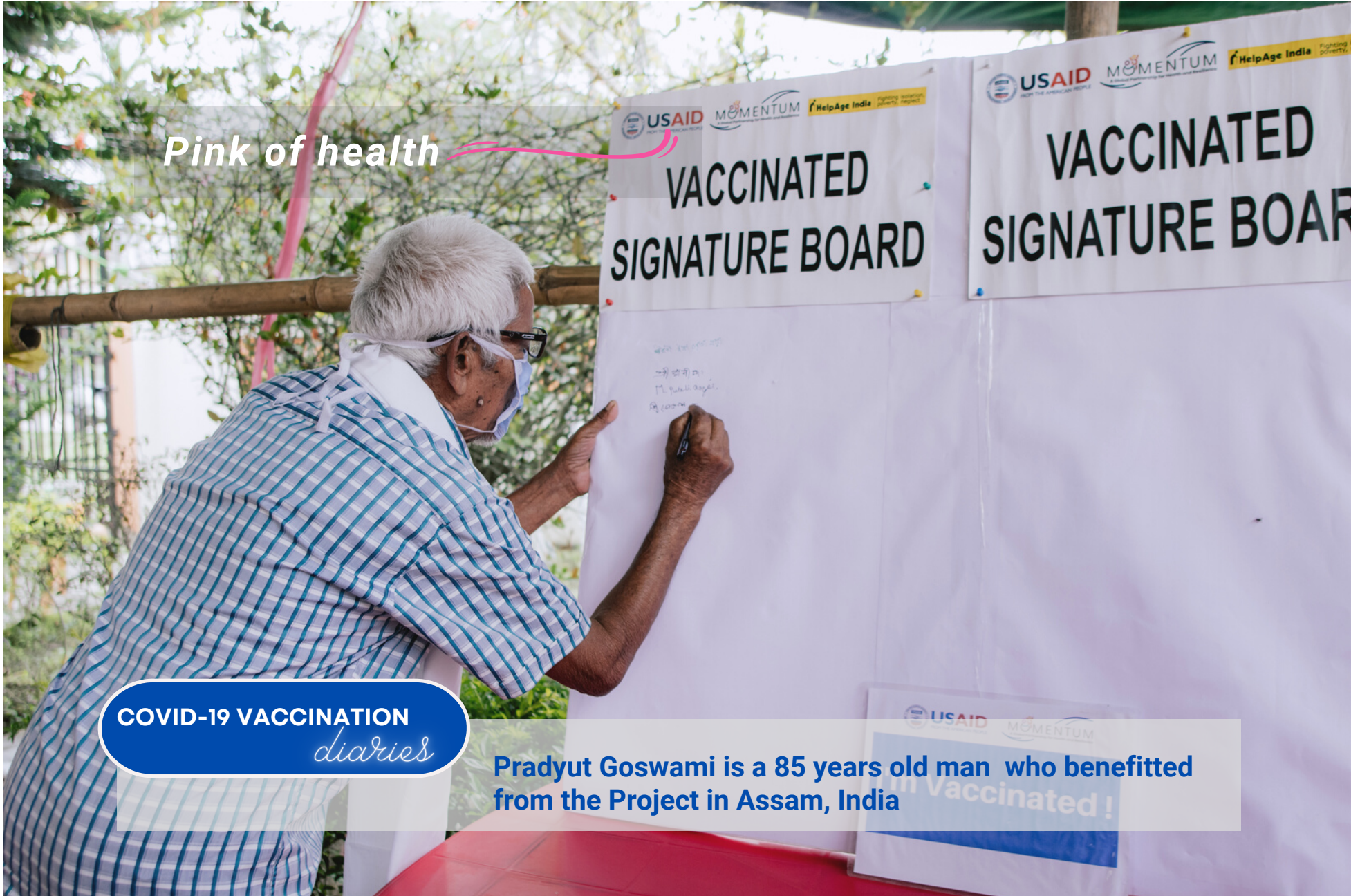


MOMENTUM

Routine Immunization Transformation and Equity



Pink of health



COVID-19 VACCINATION
diaries

Pradyut Goswami is a 85 years old man who benefitted from the Project in Assam, India



85-year-old Pradyut Goswami remembers the day when they had come to visit their home in a remote village of Assam for the first time. With an uneasy smile, he recalls two ASHA workers standing with folded hands, trying to influence his son about the necessity to get him, a senior citizen, vaccinated against COVID-19 as early as possible. Goswami's son, Manish, and his family had recently been convinced about taking the vaccine, but when it came to Goswami, he had put his foot down.

Goswami was too old to be vaccinated, his heart was weak, and he could die, they thought. They did not trust the vaccine and were rude and defiant when community leaders and NGO workers came to convince them about the efficacy of getting one and all vaccinated.

Goswami's is no isolated case, whose near ones suspected the vaccine to be dangerous for advanced ages. MOMENTUM Routine Immunization Transformation and Equity project faced major roadblocks when it came to persuading the families of senior citizens to get vaccinated.



The Project, supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), ensures equitable vaccination to vulnerable, hard-to-reach, and marginalized communities.

In Assam, the Project has engaged local non-governmental organizations like WISH Foundation, Transport Corporation of India Foundation, HelpAge India to build vaccine confidence amongst priority groups.



The Project works closely with its non-governmental organizations and their team of community mobilizers to address micro barriers, positively influence behaviours, and encourage communities to complete their COVID-19 vaccination.



Alarmed with the possibility of losing their aged family members, NGOs and volunteers associated with the project, including local influencers and health workers, met stiff hesitancy fuelled by misinformation. To lift the stalemate that was potentially putting a large section of elderly people at risk, the project's field workers pursued persistent pro-vaccine messaging and frequent door-to-door visits. They adopted hyper local strategies such as using traditional art forms to disseminate messaging, held counselling sessions, and vaccination camps until the families gave in and let their aged relations get vaccinated.



Today, Goswami and thousands like him can testify that COVID-19 vaccination has given them better protection against the new virus. Many among them are acting as community influencers in assuring their peers of the efficacy of the vaccine and combating misconceptions regarding its outcomes.



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