

## I am, I can, I will

Stories of change from the adolescent girls in Koppal

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#### Disclaimer

The stories in this booklet are drawn from real life experiences of the adolescent girls. Some of the names of the girls have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

The photographs used in this booklet have been included after receiving consent from the communities





// Building adolescent girls' self-esteem and participation in decision-making to enable them to aspire to and attain a healthy, independent and dignified life.

# LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION CAMPS



## Namaskara

I'm Kaveri. I'm 15 years old and an adolescent role model girl in Class 10, from a school in Alwandi. As a role model to my peers, I must know and stand up for my rights, develop self-esteem, show leadership qualities and encourage and motivate other girls to do the same.

Most of us girls grow up hearing that Good Girls are quiet, dutiful and obedient. We have to think and behave in a certain way. Our parents decide where we can go and for how long, how much we can study, and when and who we will marry. They tell us that Good Girls do as they're told. But there are no such expectations of boys. They don't have to drop out of school to get married or to look after their younger brothers and sisters while their parents are at work. They don't have to do any household chores. They can play outside for as long as they want. No one threatens them with bad consequences if they see them talking to girls.



Many parents are openly partial to their sons. They believe that since girls will eventually



live in their husbands' homes there's no point spending much time or money on education or careers for them. Many of us are so scared of how our parents will react that we don't even dare tell them if boys hound us on the way to school. Many parents insist that their daughters drop out of school and get married as soon as possible when this happens.

THAT'S NOT THE LIFE I WANT FOR MYSELF, I LIKE GOING TO SCHOOL I have a friend who was married off just before she turned 16 to someone her parents chose for her. She was a good student but she had to drop out because her in-laws wouldn't hear of letting her go to school after marriage.

She had a baby soon afterwards and now spends the whole day cooking, cleaning, helping in the fields and looking after her husband, in-laws and baby. Her brother, who's 19, has just started working. I hear that their parents are looking for a match for him.



I find math and science a little difficult, but I'd rather study, get a good job, earn and be independent than drop out to get married. It's unfair that girls have so many restrictions, so I'm happy Sphoorthi is helping us to learn about our rights to education, development, protection and participation in important decisions about our lives.

In April, we attended a two day-two night camp in Jnan Bandhu School to build our self-confidence, and develop our leadership, communication, conflict resolution and teamwork skills. There were more than 100 girls from four villages at the camp. I felt really shy in the beginning because I'd never spent a single night away from my family. But I soon realised that everyone was in the same position. We arrived at the camp by bus, registered, and were ushered to the refreshment stand. There we were offered two options: get our refreshments from the stand immediately or complete an obstacle course first. Most of us opted for the obstacle course.





The first obstacle was to walk through a gorilla mouth. It was dark inside and the staff were making scary noises. At that time it was quite scary. Once we entered, there were other obstacles to cross: a ladder, swing (which I fell off!), a tunnel we had to crawl through on our stomachs (with holes in the top that you could put your hand through and maybe get a surprise gift from a staff member standing outside), and a bell hanging high overhead that we had to carry each other to ring. There were points and gifts for overcoming the obstacles, and minus points for not being able to do them. By the end we were all laughing and having fun.





We were divided into small groups of about 4—5 girls and each got a Leadership and Communication Camp diary to keep notes of what we were learning. We'd rush back to our rooms after each activity and write down our thoughts about it. We also loved that there were pages at the back of the diary where we could take the autographs of the people we liked.

Later, we saw posters on social issues and video clips of Katy Perry's song, 'Roar', 'The Chairy Tale', and 'The Neighbours', and talked about how much better life is when we act with confidence and determination, think creatively, take other people's feelings into consideration, and look for solutions that work for everyone, instead of fighting. On the second day, we woke up before sunrise, did some morning warm-ups, and trekked to Malle Makkeshwar Beta, a famous Shiva temple on top of a rocky hill.

The rest of the day we had games like Dream Board, where we drew our hopes for the future, Sphoorthi Wallpaper to write how we feel about different issues, treasure hunt, ring and ball games. The treasure hunt happened in a tree! I haven't climbed a tree since I was a little girl. It showed us that there's no truth in these ideas of 'only boys can do it' or 'only girls can do it'.

It was quite tiring but the breeze, view and selfies made it all worthwhile.



We prepared speeches about the issues we face, like child marriage, being prevented from going to school, the preference for boys over girls, financial challenges, food security, health, safety, and the different ways in which we experience discrimination and violence just because we're girls.

We performed role-plays about persuading parents to send their girls to Sphoorthi meetings and school, and motivating community leaders to support girls more strongly. We learnt that we have the right to a voice in important decisions about our lives, that we should talk about our dreams and ambitions, draw them, and believe that we can make them come true with education, hard work and determination.





We interacted with other girls who've overcome the challenges we face. After dinner we sat around the campfire, singing and dancing. The second camp I attended was held during the summer holidays. We planned and managed all the arrangements under the guidance of our facilitators, from organising the space and food to co-facilitating the sessions. We had many boys helping us with the food and water. There were about 500 peer girls from five villages attending. This time again instead of speech after speech, we played games, did group activities and talked about our life experiences.

One of the activities was to build a tower from newspaper. We were divided into groups and given newspaper, tape, scissors, rubberbands and glue to make a tower. It's not easy making a tower from newspaper. We really had to put our heads together and think about how we could keep it from collapsing. But we did it, in the end. The lesson was that we can solve problems by working together and brainstorming different ways to move forward. We also saw that one weak link can bring the whole tower down, so when we work as a team, it's important to support each other.

Before we went back home, we spoke about how we can take this forward when we go back to our villages. We're planning to work on opening a library, making a weekly wallpaper, keeping piggy banks and giving tuitions to younger children.

I'LL NEVER FORGET THIS CAMP - I LEARNT TO BE BRAVE, SPEAK BEFORE MANY PEOPLE, AND TO THINK IN NEW WAYS ABOUT PROBLEMS. I MADE MANY NEW FRIENDS FROM OTHER VILLAGES AND AM NO LONGER AS SHY AS I USED TO BE.



# EXPOSURE VISITS FOR ROLE MODEL GIRLS



I'm Kavita from Koppal.

I'm 15 years old and study in Class 9. I love playing sports – kho kho is my favourite. I'd like to play when I come home from school but I have to help my mother with the household chores. I also like singing and dancing. I have a younger sister.



I was part of a group of 172 role model girls chosen for Sphoorthi's three-day exposure visit to Pillikula Nisarga Dhama in Bangalore. We were nominated by the other role model girls in our villages because we're good leaders, communicators and team players.

The trip was planned for April 2017. Before we went, the Sphoorthi officers met our parents, Gram Panchayat members and senior members of the community to tell them all about the trip. We went through a one-day orientation, where we were explained the do's and don'ts for the trip – drink a lot of water because it gets very hot, don't go anywhere without informing, and don't be shy to ask for sanitary napkins, medicines or to use the washroom. We were thrilled to get on the bus, and sang songs and laughed the whole way.



On the first day of the programme we went to the Shobhavana Ayurvedic Park, a pharmacy, Alva's Education Hub, and the ancient city of Moodbidri. We met Radhika, an entrepreneur who makes jackfruit papadam, pickles and tapioca fries to sell to local shops and vendors. She told us she was married at the age of 16 to a man who turned out to be a drunkard. Her life was so hard that she tried to commit suicide thrice. But then she started her business and as it grew, things began to change. Today, she hires young boys and girls to do the marketing. She speaks many languages. She earns enough to send her children to the best English-medium schools. She has her own vehicle. Her husband now works with her. Her advice was to not be afraid to dream and work hard to make our dreams come true. I never knew you could make a business of papadam and fries and become financially independent. I never thought a woman, and that too one who has faced so many setbacks, could become an entrepreneur! I felt very inspired.





At the Ayurvedic Park, we saw trees and plants named after sun and moon signs, learnt about Ayurveda and homeopathy, and which diseases each of these plants cures. My mother always gives us home remedies for our coughs and colds. I wrote down the names of the medicinal plants we saw and told her all about them.

Alva's Education Hub is a huge university campus affiliated to Mangalore University. It has courses in medicine, engineering, and post-graduate programmes. It also hosts many sports, arts and international activities. That was my favourite part of the trip, seeing what a real university looks like, and how life is on it. I'd never seen a place like that before. The Principal asked us what courses we were interested in, and told us what they offer and what you can do with them. We saw the zoology, physics, chemistry and botany labs. The anatomy lab was amazing, with human organs, cadavers, fetuses in different stages of growth, and some that had been born with deformities. It was strange but very exciting!

At Alva's Pharmacy, we saw how the barks, roots, and leaves of tress are used to make medicines and how they're packaged. Some must be fermented and stored for a long time, others are crushed, mixed and dried to make tablets.



The next day we went to a shopping mall, a police and legal cell, and Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, where they run a variety of training programmes. The only time I'd ever seen the inside of a police station was in the movies. Here, we met a woman constable who took us around the control room and jail. She even had a gun! We met the Police Inspector, who explained our rights and told us how we should prepare for the exams if we want to become police officers. He urged us to exercise and stay fit. A representative from the women's helpline told us how the helpline helps

women in danger. Now I know what to do if I'm ever

At the mall we saw how people shop in the urban areas. I rode on an escalator for the first time.

in trouble.

Later that day we met Rohini, a retired professor, and Merilyn, who runs Development Education Services (DEEDS), an organisation that promotes education for girls. Rohini spoke to us about why singing, dancing, acting and writing to express ourselves is important.

Merilyn told us that the girls in her programme wanted to know how we felt about our common issues like love and marriage, living with an alcoholic or single parent, sexual harassment, social media friends, drugs and suicide, so we brainstormed that for them.

Later we met Gita Tai, who had been introduced to weightlifting by her sports teacher and went on to become an international champion, going all over the world, even though her family wasn't well off. She never married because she wanted to focus completely on her sport. She told us how there have been times she was selected but was unable to go because she couldn't afford the ticket. Still, she has big dreams to set up a training institute for girls in kabaddi and weightlifting with funding from the state government.



At sunset we went to the beach. It was like a Bollywood set, with the same kind of fishing boats on the sand. We went on a boat ride and splashed around in the sea. It was a wonderful end to the second day of our trip. I must say that our villages are beautiful but so is Mangalore, with its traditional tiled roof houses, coconut trees and beaches.

On our last day, we visited Pilikula Biological Park and Science Centre. Many of us had never been to a zoo before. There we learnt how animals were domesticated, and how they're kept at the zoo. At the Pilikula Science Centre

we did science experiments that you can't do in a classroom. We saw many interesting things like the frozen shadow and the biodiversity hall. The 3D movie left me speechless!



It's important to study and get a job. Some of us had always dreamed of becoming doctors but didn't know how to do it. Now we know. There are so many options, so many other courses we can do.

## AKKA, TELL ME, WHAT HAVE YOU STUDIED? DO YOU TRAVEL A LOT? HOW MUCH DO YOU EARN?



We met girls from the Edurupadavu Community Centre. We were surprised to hear them say that boys in their village don't harass them the way boys in ours do, and decided to do something about it when we came back home.



The other role model girls also went on exposure visits and met people from many walks of life, working women in many different fields, and people who've overcome poverty, disability and early marriage and become successful. They saw the Vidhana Soudha and went to government offices. They saw trades like food preparation, solar panel assembling, and kitchen and school gardens, and learnt about the schemes that help women become financially independent.



I never dreamed I'd have a chance to get out of my village, travel to so many places, and meet so many people. I'm the first girl to have been out of my village, that too alone! It's feels like a huge achievement. It's like stepping into a different world where there is so much girls can see, do and become, so many career options and schemes we can use to go down these paths. I want to be able to stand on my own feet and not depend on anyone. We also got to bond with each other and make some good friends because of the time we spent together and all the sharing we did.

When we returned to our villages, we had meetings to share the experience with our parents, other girls in the programme, community leaders and girls and boys at school. It was good for the boys to hear what we had to say, and to realise that women can be productive and contribute to society in many different ways. We continue singing the songs we learnt on human rights, and talking about them whenever we can.



## GROUP FORMATION AND LIFE SKILLS



My name is Vidya. I'm a peer role model from Inan Bandhu School. As a role model, I was trained to be confident, communicative, assertive and ambitious, and support other girls to be the same.



I joined the programme on Friendship Day in August 2017. There were about 80 girls who'd heard about Sphoorthi and were keen to join. The District Project Coordinator (DPC), Mr Rajkumar Kataraki, explained that the programme was a girl-led movement to stop early marriage and school drop out, and improve the quality of adolescent girls' lives. He described the objectives and the vision of the programme, and explained that many of the inequalities we face in education, careers, and going out are a result of our social norms. Everyone follows them, so if we want to change them and create new norms, we have to do it together.

That's why there was so much emphasis on working as teams.

In the life skills module of the Parivathan for Girls programme, we played games, performed role-plays, and discussed case studies to be clear about our own values. Every week, we spoke about how beliefs are formed, how to communicate effectively, and other topics like the bias against girls in our gender norms, and the long-term problems caused by child marriage. One discussion was about how we all have strengths and good qualities that are much more important than whether we're fair or dark, thin or fat.

I found this very useful because my parents worry that they won't be able to find a good boy for me because I'm dark-skinned. I've always felt bad about it.

We had sessions on understanding, managing and expressing our emotions in a healthy way, communicating assertively rather than aggressively or passively, protecting ourselves from sexual abuse, and resolving conflicts.



In January, 10 of us were chosen to manage the Sphoorthi food and games stall at the Gavimath Jatra. That's a fair that draws huge crowds from Koppal district and beyond. There are swings and rides, and stalls for shopping. We wore Sphoorthi t-shirts, jeans, caps and gloves for hygiene. We organised the waste disposal and didn't use any plastic because we wanted to set an example for the other vendors at the fair. It was good practice to do business and talk to people like this.



Many times I just go along with what's happening because I'm afraid to speak up and scared of what people might think of me. The communication skills activities we did here helped us understand the difference between assertive, aggressive and passive communication.

IF A BOY SAYS SOMETHING I DON'T LIKE, I FEEL UPSET
BUT DON'T SAY ANYTHING. THAT'S PASSIVE COMMUNICATION.
SOMETIMES I SHOUT AT THEM. THAT'S AGGRESSIVE.
THE ASSERTIVE WAY WOULD BE TO TELL HIM FIRMLY BUT
POLITELY TO STOP, AND TELL A TEACHER OR FAMILY
MEMBER IF HE DOESN'T.

In May, I participated in Sphoorthi's Interactive Intimate
Theatre (IIT) workshop with 78 other girls from 16 villages.
I went in thinking we'd be given a script, told to learn the
lines, and taught how to perform but it turned out to be
completely different. IIT is all about
drawing the audience into the play so
that they too become actors in it.
You have to use your voice, body,
mind and heart, a lot more than
learning lines and performing them.

We worked together on five plays that all had social themes. Through the experience we learnt to overcome stage fright, speak loudly and clearly, work together with girls from other villages, plan a show, be punctual, and concentrate. I discovered talents I never knew I had.

Another way we've been building our confidence and cooperation is through sports. We were so happy to get a ball and net to play volleyball! This is the first time we have sports for girls in our village. It's always been the boys who play. Playing sports teaches us to compete in a healthy way, concentrate, follow rules and do our best. The best part is that we have so much fun, it doesn't feel like learning.



// Fostering parent-child and community-child dialogue using a traditional samuada format to enable adolescent girls to speak up for themselves in the family and community.





I'm Dyamana from Yellamgera village. My daughter, Mahadevi, is a peer role model. My wife, Hulgiemma and I agreed to become role model parents after the community organiser explained why it's so important that parents support their daughters. Role model parents do two things: support their daughters' right to study and follow her ambitions, as well as urge other parents to join the movement

The samvadas have been a wonderful opportunity for us to understand our daughters better. To be honest, as my daughter started growing, it was her mother who would interact more with her. I was more of the authority figure. I hadn't realised until I started participating in the samvadas how important it is for a father to be involved in his daughter's life. In our villages we're overly-concerned about our daughters' behaviour and reputation. It's believed that the honour of the family depends on them.

One of the girls asked why it's only girls and not boys who have to carry this burden, but this is the way it's always been. For example, I had no problem sending our son to hostel, and now it's been three months since I saw him. But when the idea of sending my daughter came up, I thought hundred times about it and finally decided not to send her.

In the first activity, our daughters introduced us by name, our favourite food and a quality they liked most about us. I was touched when my daughter said I support her, look after her financial needs, let her go to camps, and talk nicely to people. Then the fathers were blindfolded and taken on a 500m walk by their daughters. My daughter didn't let me stumble even once; I too will never let her down.

I WAS TOUCHED WHEN MY DAUGHTER SAID I SUPPORT HER We did many activities like this, had discussions, and played games to build a stronger bond through communication and trust. The Relationship Cycle activity helped me see that I could strengthen my relationship with my daughter by spending more time with her.

The girls did some role-plays that helped us understand how they would like us to support them in some common situations, like if they didn't do well on a test, we could encourage them to study harder instead of shouting at them, or if we find out that boys are 'teasing' them, we could advise them to just ignore it and focus on doing well in school instead of withdrawing them.



At one samvada we looked at some case studies, some real, and how we could deal with them. For example, a girl secretly runs off to Bangalore with a boy. When she returns a week later, her parents are in a rage and the entire village is gossiping. She has to drop out of school because her parents refuse to let her out of the house and she's too embarrassed to face her teachers and classmates anyway.

We had to reflect on the situation and what advice we'd give the girl and her parents, and also how it would be different if we were speaking to the boy and his family.

Then there was the true case of a Sphoorthi role model, 'Sunitha', a student in Class q. She liked going to school but also knew that she'd soon have to drop out and get married to a boy her parents had found for her. Then Sunitha's mother went on an exposure trip to Mysore and came back wanting more for her daughter than an arranged marriage before she was even of legal age. They asked the groom's family to wait for another three or four years, at least until she turned 18 and finished her studies. Sunitha was delighted but the groom and his family were not. Soon afterwards, she was forced into the marriage against her will and without her parents' knowledge. She was weeping as she told her friends how unhappy she was and how much she wanted to go back to school but her husband and in-laws refused to let her go.

We were asked what we would do if it was us or our child.

What would we say to the girl, her parents, her husband and in-laws? Our response was to suggest that the girl continues her education until the age of 18, and then decide what was best for her as an educated woman with options.

In the Agree/ Don't Agree game there were three signs, 'Agree', 'Not Sure' and 'Don't Agree', placed under three different trees.

Our trainer read out sentences about our social norms, like a daughter isn't worth investing in because she goes to her husband's home anyway; early marriage protects a girl's honour; men should control women; it's natural for boys to 'tease' girls.

After each statement that he read out, we had to go and stand under the sign that applied, and try to persuade those who felt differently to change their minds. It was a very lively discussion that made us think hard about the usefulness of the norms we take for granted, how they influence our actions and behaviours, and how they affect our daughters.

The samvadas helped us understand our daughters' perspectives and aspirations, and why healthy communication and trust is so important between parents and children. It's only when they trust us that they communicate with us. And only when we have all sides can we guide them properly, and in a way that they understand and cooperate.



Apart from father-daughter samvadas we also had couples' workshops. These were to help us become closer as spouses, and understand each other better so that we can support our daughters in the best way. Again, through games and discussions we saw why our daughters need the support of both parents, and the specific areas we should pay most attention to rights, education, health and nutrition.

In the bangle game, the women took out all their bangles. The men were told to put back as many bangles as they could on their wives' arms without hurting them in a fixed time period. The couple that had the most bangles on the wife won. In the couple's three-legged race, the winners were the ones who ran in step with each other.



In the balloon game, each couple was given a balloon to blow and pass between each other to keep in the air. Some players were given toothpicks to puncture the balloons. The lesson was that there are always people trying to puncture our hopes and dreams, but as parents we must work together to support our daughters to overcome any hurdles to their well-being and development.

We're already seeing the impact of these *samvadas* and of supporting our daughters. They've had a library opened up in a government building here. They got the space for free in 32 villages after *samvada* with the community leaders. In 14 other villages, they've rented space. Apart from storybooks, they have over a hundred books on science, math, health and personality development. I feel proud to see my daughter contributing to the development of the village.



The libraries are a space for reading and discussion – we hold parent meetings there, the Sphoorthi role models and peers meet there as well. The role model girls maintain the register of books that have been issued and returned. The books have to be issued in the name of a role model girl.

Just outside they've made a timeline of the Sphoorthi journey. Because of their initiatives, the Bahadurbandi Panchayat agreed to pay for math tuitions for girls for two months.

In Bevinhalli, they got the Kirloskar factory to sponsor a math and English tutor for a month. In Hosahalli, they communicated that the conflict between the teachers and principal was affecting classes. The matter was resolved and classes have

In Hirebagnal village, the girls were facing a big problem with the boys' misbehavior. They raised the matter at a community samvada. The leaders promised to look into the matter. The next day an SDMC member went to each classroom and warned the boys that anyone found guilty of harassing a girl would be rusticated. That led to a noticeable change in the boys' behaviour. At the International Girl Child Day (IGCD) programme, the girls got a chance to meet the Gram Panchayat President and members, DC, SP, DHO, DDPI, and DD-WCD, PDO, GP. It was a good experience to instill confidence in them.





They had a bicycle rally followed by a samvada with government officials about living without discrimination. Ms M Kangavalli, DC, gave a speech on how important it is to be educated and get a job before getting married, and that girls, instead of being dependent on anyone, can also take care of their parents, brothers and sisters. There were many other government officials present so they raised other issues that affect them, like preventing secret marriages of unwilling girls, transport to school to minimise 'eve teasing' from boys, vocational training for girls who had dropped out of school, and making sanitary pads and IFA tablets available to them.

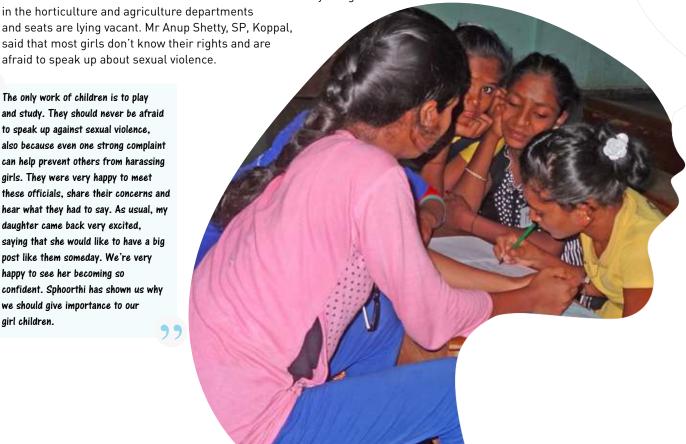




Mr Krishna Ukkunda, DWCD, and Deputy Director of the Horticulture Department spoke about the importance of training in skills like notepad binding, papadam and pickle making, for which there is an urban market. He encouraged them to continue studying because there are very few girls

The only work of children is to play and study. They should never be afraid to speak up against sexual violence, also because even one strong complaint can help prevent others from harassing girls. They were very happy to meet these officials, share their concerns and hear what they had to say. As usual, my daughter came back very excited, saying that she would like to have a big post like them someday. We're very happy to see her becoming so confident. Sphoorthi has shown us why we should give importance to our

girl children.





## EXPOSURE VISITS FOR PARENTS



I'm Laxmi, mother of Shilpa, from Kinnal village. My daughter Shilpa, who is a role model in the programme was chosen to go on the exposure visits. I was very uncomfortable with the idea at first because we've never done such a thing. We've always been very cautious with our daughters. It's a dangerous world, anything can happen, and it's our duty as parents to protect them until they get married. But the community organiser promised us that they would be looked after very well. By this time the Sphoorthi team had already spent a lot of time with us. We'd developed a relationship and come to trust them.

When the possibility of exposure visits for parents came up, we were thrilled! Some of us had never been cutside our village, and here was a chance to travel without having to pay for anything! The idea was to orient us to the opportunities that exist for girls

WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN VERY CAUTIOUS WITH OUR DAUGHTERS. IT'S A DANGEROUS WORLD, ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN, AND IT'S OUR DUTY AS PARENTS TO PROTECT THEM UNTIL THEY GET MARRIED.

today, see how the world beyond our village has progressed, and interact with women achievers from various fields. We also met doctors who spoke about the ill-effects of early marriage on children

It amazed me to see how much a girl can do apart from getting married, having children and staying at home to look after her husband and family. These days girls can do almost everything that boys can do if they're given the chance and the support to go to school, study well, eat well, and stay healthy. It was interesting for us to see that encouraging girls to study and fulfil their aspirations isn't something extraordinary that only we would be doing. Families everywhere are doing it, and their daughters are accomplishing big things. We plan to support our daughter to do the same, and also encourage other parents in our village to give their daughters a chance.

Adolescent girls' lives are so restricted. Their talents and creativity are not tapped just because we're fearful of harm coming to them. But there was such a positive change in our daughter when she came back.

She was so excited to go, and has been much more confident and communicative since she came back.

We feel confident about sending her out to participate in more such events. We feel proud that she's a role model to other girls and we too are encouraging other parents to urge their daughters to participate in the programme.

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// Providing remedial education to enable adolescent girls in the programme to cope with challenging subjects and feel optimistic about completing their education.

# REMEDIAL RANGE CLASSES



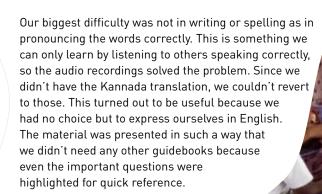
I'm Shanta Purad, a Class 10 student of Girls High School, government school in Alavandi. I've always found math and English difficult. Many other girls in my class feel the same way. The thought of the board exams was very scary so Sphoorthi organised a three-month remedial training programme for us in those subjects.

It began with a day-long programme that 45 of us from 30 villages attended to discuss the problems we were facing with different subjects and how we could solve them. We were all struggling with English and math, so we asked to be tutored on summarising prose in English and Kannada, and on higher scoring grammar questions like letter and profile writing. In math, we needed help with trigonometry, surds, series, algebra and circles.



When the programme began, we were each given a package of audio recordings on smartphone chips and printed copies of English questions and answers. At every session, we were divided into groups of nine. Each group had an audio recording, the hard copies and a set of questions they had to study and discuss among themselves.

At the end of 50 minutes, the groups summarised what they had learnt for the others.



Another interesting method we followed was using YouTube videos and apps. We learnt how to use the Internet to find information and videos with math, English and science lessons. Those of us who needed videos downloaded only had to ask. It was very helpful because teachers are not easy to find in our villages, and this programme decreased our dependence on them.

WE WERE DIRECTED TO THE BEST KANNADA TO ENGLISH VIDEOS. THESE ONLINE SESSIONS WERE HELD AFTER OUR WEEKLY SESSIONS, SO WE HAD THAT EXTRA INCENTIVE TO COME TO CLASS. THE ONLINE SESSIONS WERE LATER CONDUCTED FOR GIRLS IN OTHER VILLAGES AS WELL.

A few boys joined as well, even though they had to pay, whereas it was free for us. Apart from these classes, we also formed self-study groups to help us do better at school and finish our secondary education. The community organiser divided the chapters up between us and helped us present our assignments.



We did many activities to learn and remember what we were learning. One of these was the Bingo Sheet. We each folded a sheet of paper into 16 parts, and got five minutes to write one

thing we learnt during the session in each of eight squares. Then we exchanged sheets and read out what the others had written. When we'd read out everyone's sheets, we got our own sheets back and filled in the points that we'd missed.



Another activity we did was the Wandering Flip Chart, where we were divided into four groups and each group had to prepare a part of the chapter we were studying that day. Then each group went to each of the other groups to understand the entire chapter. At the end of the class we all shared what we'd learnt.



Other than that, we did a lot of discussions about what we'd learnt. We gave our feedback about the learning activity, brainstorming the learning objectives of a chapter, role-playing different characters in a story, doing art activities (our ideal village, our hopes and dreams), watching videos (science experiments, English conversation, geological phenomena like earthquakes, tsunamis and landslides), conducting small experiments, debates and speeches on current topics or on important days to build our self-confidence and speaking skills, handwriting and general knowledge.

In Kinnal village, Laxmi, the community organiser, got the girls to read the newspaper aloud at the weekly group class. Many of the girls there could hardly read even in Kannada, because they had no support - they had to do the household chores after school and there was very little time or quiet to study. When Laxmi found out that this was the problem, she spoke to the parents. They jointly decided to rent an empty house in the village where the girls could study without distractions. The seven girls each contributed Rs 25 per month towards the rent. DAILY NEWS

As peer girls also joined, they were grouped into pairs, with one girl in the pair with a good enough grasp of the subject to help the other. They assembled at 7 pm every day to do their homework. The girls in the pairs checked each other's homework, and then the students of Class 9 and Class 10 separated for group study. In the group study we learnt from each other. Those who were better at English translated sentence by sentence into Kannada so that the rest of us could understand. The other girls explained math, science or social science, whichever subject they were best at.

They stopped to go home for dinner, returned to study until late into the night, sleep there for a few hours, and went home again at dawn.





## PROGRAM DATA



## I AM CAPABLE

The leadership and communication camps helped us show others they can believe in us!



6 camps for

540 role models

25 camps for

2,149 adolescent peers

Groups in which we learnt and practiced life skills helped us learn to believe in ourselves!

**64** groups of

676 role models\*

284 groups of

2,969 adolescent peers\*\*

\* 569 role models completed

\*\* 2,721 peers completed

Exposure visits helped us see for ourselves what a big world of opportunity there is out there!

**558** role models traveled in **15** groups

2,120 adolescent peers traveled in 45 groups.



## I CAN LEARN

Samuadas with our parents were an opportunity to interact in ways we'd never done before.

Exposure visits for our parents helped them see the amazing ways in which women are contributing to their families and the world.



**217**samvada conversations



5,474 role models & adolescent peers



2,2/1 parents actively listen to girls



**456** parents traveled in **16** groups



I WILL SHARE

Remedial lessons brought us up to speed in the subjects we struggled with and helped us prepare better for our exams.



**561** role models in 2016–17

370 girls availed tuition class 239 131 RMAG peer girls

**251** peers in 2017–18

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