



Ugam



**Ugam
Education
Foundation**

**ANNUAL REPORT
2023- 2024**



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A Snapshot of the year gone by...



We believe

every adolescent girl needs a secondary school, empowering practices, meaningful learning, role models and a support network to change her life and her community

We celebrate

the transformation journey of 185 KGBV/JBAV schools in Jharkhand

- the start of an empowerment journey for **65 Sashakti Fellows** (18 of the first batch Fellows graduated this year)
- the expansion of reach to girls in communities and anganwadis.
- State wide launch of the first ever **KGBV Alumni Program**
- the addition of three absolutely dynamic and empowered women: Ms Mridula Sinha, Ms Amita Chauhan and Ms. Purvi Vora join **as Advisory Board members**

We relentlessly worked to

reach **60000+** adolescent girls in **185 KGBV/JBAV** schools in 17 Aspirational Districts of Jharkhand

We created

and implemented the Jharkhand KGBV Alumni program. After the State Orientation, **17 district orientation and 100 KGBV School Alumni meetings** have been completed.

We collaborated

with the **Jharkhand Education Project Council** to launch the first ever Jharkhand State KGBV Alumni Program and co-created a **coffee table book with Adolescent Health Champions** (our partners) expanded the work on adolescent health education to additional **109 KGBV/JBAV schools!**

We questioned

norms and practices around **menstruation, anemia and gender** with **25000+** adolescent girls in grades 7, 8 and 9

We facilitated

remedial hindi and English sessions with **18000+** girls in grades 6 and 7

We supported

the creation of **175 libraries** with a special room, relevant books and 50000 adolescent girls eager to read everyday

We energized

100 bal sansads with active members who are aware of their role and eager to transform their schools

175 schools also now have a participative and lively assembly every morning

We need

support from all of you.

Join us.

Donate to us.

Visit us in Jharkhand and spread the word around!

The Year Gone by...



The year 2023-2024...

As I reflect on the Ugam journey, the three top most emotions are: pride, gratitude and hunger!

March 31st, every year, is a day of endings and new beginnings!

As I reflect on the Ugam journey, the three top most emotions are – pride, gratitude and hunger!

It's been a year of both, the new and the old, growth and consolidation.

Consolidation of what we do every year, facilitate conversations with adolescent girls about health and gender education, ensure girls' foundational competencies in Hindi and English improve and girls find their voice and agency. Along with this, we supported institutions (KGBV and JBAV schools) to have libraries, assemblies and Bal Sansads as participative, learning spaces.

In partnership with the Jharkhand Education Project Council (JEPC), a State-wide KGBV Alumni Program was launched. The journey of the program and its vision were encapsulated in a coffee table book.

With JCERT, we co-created a Gender Education program for girls in KGBVs.

Ugam was fortunate to be part of amazing conversations at the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) FemNet4GTE- Feminist Network for Gender Transformative education conference in Istanbul.

In addition, Ugam team spoke at the Whole Child Development CSO Workshop and Unicef workshop on "Body Image and Positivity" at Ranchi.

Without the amazing team at Ugam and the unflinching faith of our supporters, this journey would have been impossible. A deep gratitude to all our well-wishers!

We are excited and energised to expand our work in Jharkhand to all districts and KGBV Schools.

We will deepen our work with more partnerships and meaningful interventions for girls.

Our hunger drives us to create a scalable District-level Anganwadi model that will reach more children and adolescent girls in communities.

From our COO...



जोहार,

शुरुआत बधाइयों के साथ करना चाहूंगा कि उगम की अविरल यात्रा इस साल अपने 9वें वर्ष में प्रवेश किया है।

साल दर साल, सिलसिलेवार ढंग से इस वर्ष भी उगम की 'शिक्षा व सशक्तिकरण' की सरिता ने विभिन्न रूपों में विकास कार्यों का विस्तार किया है। इस विस्तार के क्रम में हम झारखण्ड के जितना करीब गए, उतना ही इसकी 'भौगोलिक बनावट, सहज-मृदुल जनजातीय जीवन और प्राकृतिक सौन्दर्य' से परिचित होते रहे हैं। झारखंड, जो कि जोहार के उद्वोधन से आपका स्वागत करता है, जीवन को जानने-जीने की जिज्ञासा से भरता है, आप जितना यहाँ होते है, जितना यहाँ बाँटते है, यह जमीं आपको कई-कई मामलों में, उससे कहीं ज्यादा 'समृद्ध' करती रहती है। इस साल उगम ने 'झारखण्ड जीवटता' को और भी गहरे अर्थों में कस्तूरबा की किशोरियों के साथ-साथ, आंगनबाड़ी की सेविका दीदी में भी देखा है।

हमने शिक्षा विभाग के साथ संयुक्त रूप से सशक्तिकरण के तीनों ज़रूरी स्तंभ 'शिक्षा, शक्ति और अभिव्यक्ति' पर, कस्तूरबा में अध्ययनरत छात्राओं के बीच सतत और विधिवत् कार्य किया है। राज्य भर में किशोरियों के साथ अग्रणीय संस्था के रूप में उगम ने कस्तूरबा से उत्तीर्ण छात्राओं के लिए 'एलुम्नी कार्यक्रम' के अंतर्गत उन्हें 'रोल मॉडल' के तौर पर निखारा और प्रस्तुत किया है। इसी वर्ष हमारे सशक्ति फेलोशिप के गहन 3 वर्षीय कार्यक्रम की पहली बैच 19 फ़ेलो के साथ उत्तीर्ण हुई है।

शिक्षा विभाग के साथ संयुक्त रूप से हमने अत्यंत शानदार साझेदारी निभाते हुए, JEPC तथा JCERT के तत्वाधान में 'ट्रांसफ़ॉर्मिंग केजीबीवी कार्यक्रम, KGBV एलुम्नी कार्यक्रम, जेंडर मोड्यूल का निर्माण और क्रियान्वयन' किया है। राज्य, ज़िला और विद्यालय स्तर पर शिक्षकों के लिए प्रशिक्षण कार्यशाला का आयोजन किया गया है।

हमारी यह बड़ी उपलब्धि है कि लगातार लंबे अंतराल तक किशोरियों के साथ विभिन्न प्रयासों के फलस्वरूप, अब हम हर साल विद्यालय से निकल कर सैकड़ों की संख्या में उभरती हुई 'युवा लीडरों' को समाज के अलग-अलग क्षेत्रों में 'सक्रिय और जिम्मेवार' होते हुए देख पा रहे हैं। यकीनन उगम के लिए इस सशक्तिकरण की पूरी प्रक्रिया के साथ परिणाम में शामिल तथा साक्षी होना उपलब्धियों से भरा अनुभव है।

हज़ारों की संख्या में हमने इस वर्ष गुमला, बोकारो, राँची, खूँटी, पश्चिमी सिंहभूम जैसे ज़िलों में आंगनबाड़ी की सेविकाओं को प्रशिक्षित किया है। इस पूरे साल हमने आंगनबाड़ी में 'स्कूल रेडीनेस और किशोरी सशक्तिकरण' पर विशेष ध्यान दिया है। अब 'आंगनबाड़ी' गाँवों में किशोरी-युवतियों के लिए एक मिलने-बैठने-बतियाने की विशेष और सुरक्षित जगह का रूप ले रही है। भारतीय सुदूर गाँवों के प्रत्येक पोषण क्षेत्र की परिसीमा में, सर्वाधिक प्रभावी महिला होती है वहाँ की सेविका दीदी। प्रशिक्षण के उपरांत सेविका की 'दृष्टि और व्यवहार' में आए सकारात्मक बदलाव से गाँव में 'सशक्तिकरण' का एक अनूठा वातावरण अनुभव किया जा सकता है।

कल के शिक्षित-सशक्त समाज को बनाने में किसी भी प्रकार से सहभागी उगम के हर साथी का योगदान अमूल्य है। हमारा अटूट विश्वास 'मिलकर, एकसाथ होकर, सहयोगी बनकर, आगे बढ़ने' पर है। उगम टीम, सरकारी संस्थाएं, अधिकारीगण, गैर सरकारी संस्था के साथी, शिक्षक, डोनर और हमसे संबंधित हमारे हितैषियों को साधुवाद, उनके निरंतर समर्थन और सहयोग के लिए। इस साल एक बड़ी दुःखद घटना भी घटी। एक कार एक्सीडेंट में हमने हमारे अज़ीज़ प्रिय साथी श्री रिक्की शर्मा को खो दिया। उनसे मिलती प्रेरणा, काम के प्रति समर्पण का भाव, हमेशा हमारे साथ बना है, बना रहेगा।

आप सभी को पुनः धन्यवाद हमारे साथ जुड़े रहने के लिए और यँ ही साथ चलते रहने के लिए।

शुभेच्छा
-संजय झा

Our belief



Adolescent girls and young women from rural communities give us hope. Our hearts are filled with optimism when we see their resilience, passion, and desire to want to change the world for the better.

Every adolescent girl needs a secondary school, empowering practices, meaningful learning, role models and a support network to change her life and her community

Ensuring all girls complete secondary school, facilitating programs in schools that educate and empower girls have been Ugam's critical initiatives. After completion of class 12, the KGBV Alumni Program creates a platform for the young women. The program ensures that Alumni feel supported and guided for their future endeavours.

The Alumni of KGBV are now the "sheroes" for the current students. In the communities they are the harbingers of change and hope.

Our Work

Our approach and implementation is based on our understanding that for adolescent girls empowerment is manifested as the encouragement of – **Shiksha** (learning), **Shakti** (health and wellness) and **Abhivyaakti** (voice and agency).

Role played by Ugam

We believe the empowerment of girls is a long and immersive journey. In an integrated model we engage with systems (district and State education teams), Institutions (schools, wardens and teachers) and individuals (current and alumni students of KGBVs).

Our three Core Programs to achieve the change are

1. Transforming KGBVs/JBAVs (Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas)
2. Sashakti Fellowship
3. Community Reach

	In KGBV Schools	Sashakti Fellowship	Community Reach
With adolescent girls	Remedial learning Health Positive behaviors Gender Transformative Education Songs and storytelling Critical thinking	Recruit KGBV Alumni for fellowship Sessions to build leadership – knowledge, skills and attitudes	Health and gender education Songs and storytelling Critical thinking
Institutions	Upgradation of School Library Warden Leadership Teacher capacity building Bal Sabha activated with wardens and teachers	Implementation of State KGBV Alumni program in schools Ensuring maximum number of Alumni engage in a 200 hour empowerment program	Design and implement a District Anganwadi Strengthening model that will support young children (through foundational learning-FLN) and adolescent girls' empowerment
Systems	Setting collective vision, planning, training and reviews to drive accountability District Education Officers and Gender Coordinators Workshop Regular meetings/updates with State and District officials Knowledge and practice briefs created for scale and impact		

Our Achievements



Transforming KGBV Schools

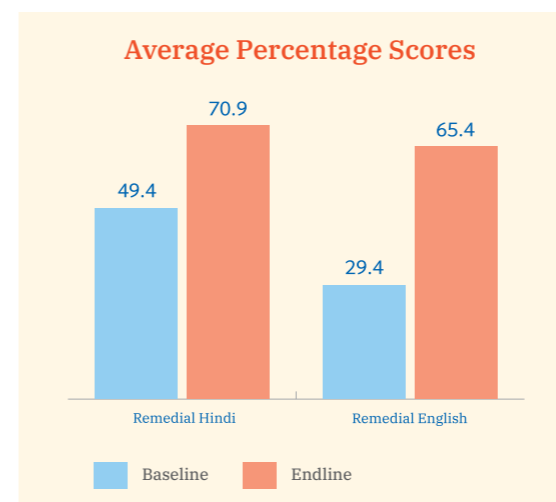
Shiksha: learning

Learning gaps pose a significant concern within the Indian education system. Although Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) has acquired much headlines for early years, we find the need for these even at grade 6 level. For most of the girls in KGBVs the mother tongue is either a tribal and/or local language. This fact compounded by the status of learning in primary schools has necessitated the bridging of such foundational learning at grade 6 & 7.

Through our remedial program in foundational hindi and English for class 6 and 7 girls we have targeted core competencies from grades 1 to 4 so that the students are able to learn, understand and integrate better with their class 6 curriculum. Starting with songs and stories we then move to letters, phonics, words and then sentences using fun, interactive teaching methods. Girls participate in groupwork, discussions and feel excited about learning new content.

Across **17 districts, 18000+** girls from grade 6 and 7 **were taught remedial Hindi and remedial English.**

2700 girls participated in the baseline and 1800 girls in the endline evaluation. We share below the data



Virtual Support for class 10

Our Virtual English Learning Support Program for grade 10 students was availed by 55 KGBV/JBAV schools in 5 districts- Chatra, Latehar, East Singhbhum, Hazaribagh and Bokaro Reaching close to 3100 students, these sessions are thoughtfully curated along with required material (Worksheets) to help them prepare for their board exams.



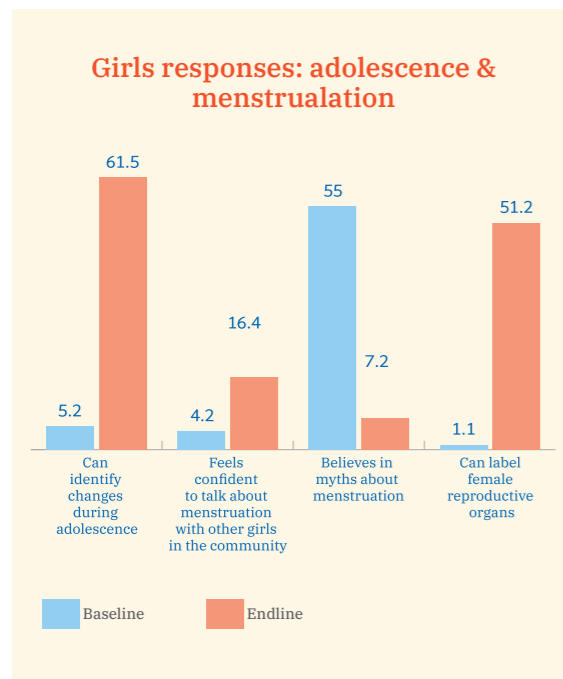
Shakti: health and gender education

A critical area to build agency and voice for girls is breaking taboos about health and gender education. Traditionally, a culture of silence has pervaded around issues such as menstrual hygiene and gender. We worked hard to build knowledge and skills and develop critical thinking and questioning the prevalent culture and practices.

Although brimming with questions inside the girls show an outward façade of silence and awkwardness initially.

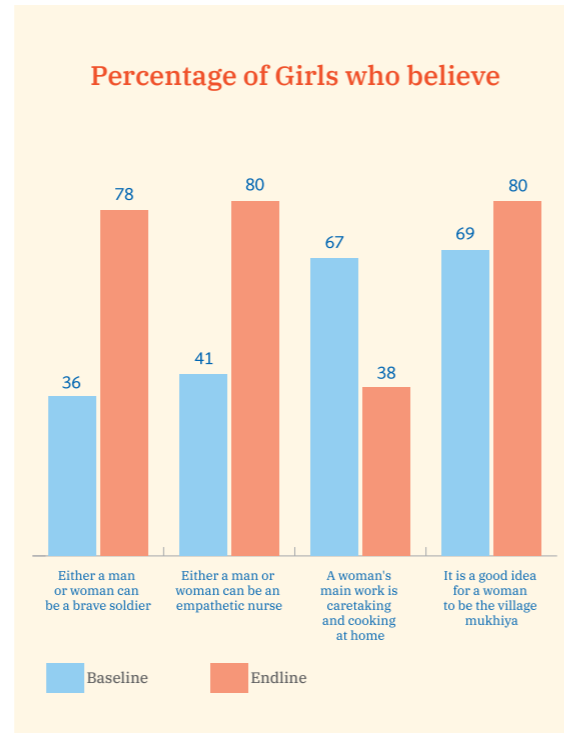
25,000 girls in 185 classrooms participated in sessions on topics such as adolescence, menstrual health, anemia and gender education.

At the start and end of the sessions we administered a test to evaluate the knowledge and attitude shifts among the girls. The graph below shows the percentage of girls who reflected these changes on the test.

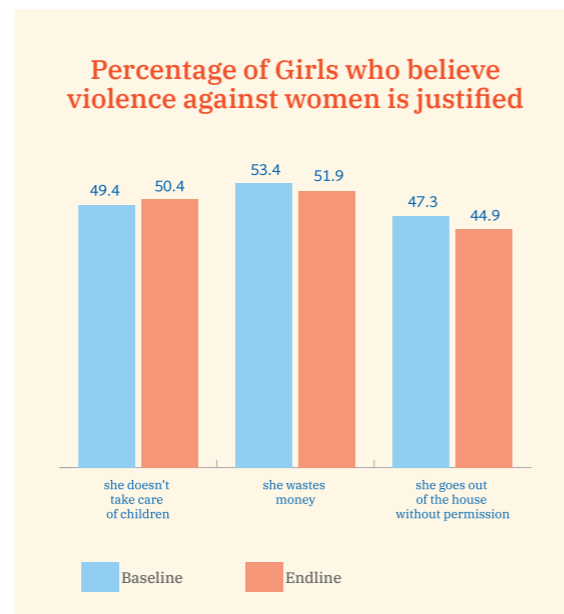


The deeply entrenched gender attributes, biases and stereotypes about gender based violence are rarely examined and questioned by girls, in communities and schools.

Ugam co-created a Gender Education module with the JCERT (Jharkhand Council of Education Research and Training) and facilitated sessions with class 9 girls.



The data above (of close to 750 girls from grade 9) demonstrates that while attitudes to gender based vocations, roles and attributes change more easily the attitude to gender based violence is harder to change.



Abhivaykti: voice and agency

Our experience over the last many years has taught us that voice and agency develop through robust, participative processes and authentic role models. It is about ensuring that facilitators create safe



spaces, ask tough questions and engage participants in fun activities. We found using songs and stories to be powerful tools. Singing hara samandar or neela neela paani ensured every girl participated, sang, acted and laughed. Stories built curiosity about storybooks and library.

In **175 schools** girls remember our Sashakti Fellows for their songs and stories.

Institution Building for Model KGBV creation

A core component of our work is around building institutions, positively changing their culture, thus supporting every KGBV to become an institution that delivers education and also empowers their students.

A total of **185 KGBV/JBAV schools were visited.**

We focus on three key practices or processes in every school- library as a learning space, assembly as a participative space and bal sansad as a collaborative space.

We have supported the **setting up of 175 libraries in schools.**

These libraries now have a special

room decorated by the students. The walls are decorated with Library Rules and other materials. Girls engage in storytelling and other activities.

100+ wardens have ensured that "Library Period" is integrated in the time table and all girls visit the library at least weekly.

In the words of a warden from Bokaro- अभी बहुत अच्छा लग रहा है, हमारी छात्राएँ लायब्रेरी में जाने के लिए झगड़ा करती हैं।

In more than 60 schools we worked to take the libraries and learning at a higher level. We worked with the students on higher order thinking skills such as predicting, summarizing, creative imagination etc.

Bal Sabha activated in 100



schools. Often times we found bal sansad members in schools to be disinterested and passive. Our Fellows worked their magic and in 100 schools we have energetic bal sansad. Students are aware of their role, wardens are excited and they are all working towards creating a better school.

Warden and Teacher



Empowerment

Our engagement with wardens and teachers in KGBVs continued.

At every visit through the year Ugam team engaged with them in their schools and discussed the various school strengthening initiatives.

Ugam facilitated sessions in the 4 day State level training program- "Empowering Girls, Transforming Futures: A Training Workshop for KGBV/JBAV Teachers on Promoting Gender Equality" for all 260 schools representatives.

The State KGBV Alumni program started with orientation will all wardens and then has been successfully led by wardens and Ugam team in schools.

Lastly, 115 wardens engaged in session on Career Guidance for class 12 students.

Bokaro district had 60 participants attend a teacher training by Ugam.

Sashakti Program

20 young women from our first batch of Sashakti Fellowship program graduated in March 2024.

Their journeys of empowerment are a source of immense inspiration for everyone.

From very tentative beginnings,



these young women have empowered themselves; each of them travels independently and had freedom of mobility, they possess and manage their bank accounts, they are confident of communicating with various stakeholders at village, block and district level. As they share, the biggest change has been developing courage, resilience and a vision for the future. Their awareness and perspectives on core issues about learning and gender have positively changed.

Several of them join Ugam as Program Leaders.

Many continue their higher education and /or training and some are engaging in entrepreneurial journeys.

Ugam currently engages with 65 young women as full time Sashakti Fellows.

Community Outreach

It is our constant endeavor to reach more girls and children in Jharkhand. The first step towards this was our needs assessment across 60 villages. The findings from the research helped us design the next steps- engaging with Anganwadi Sevika didis and block and district level officers.

With support and guidance from officers, we began in Gumla. The program began with an orientation with officers and 30 aanganwadi Supervisors.

360 anganwadi sevikas were selected by the District Officers and attended a 3 day residential training program by Ugam.

Similarly, in Bokaro district, after the orientation workshop, the Ugam team trained 2300 Aanganwadi workers on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy activities.

In addition, we reached 1000+ Anganwadi sevikas in additional districts and blocks.

The fellows played a vital role in organizing and leading these workshops. Let's see how they felt: आज के इस प्रशिक्षण में सुपरवाइजर भी बालगीत गाने में शामिल हुईं। सुपरवाइजर आज हमारे साथ लगातार जुड़े रहे और हमारा हौसला बढ़ाया। आज का आगनवाड़ी प्रशिक्षण हमारे लिए बहुत अच्छा था और बहुत नई-नई गतिविधियाँ सीखने को मिला।
Manti Kumari

मैं ने कई बार देखा कि आंगनबाड़ी सेविका प्रशिक्षण में किशोरियों के ऊपर बात करने का समय आता है तब सेविका दीदी कम रुचि दिखाती है। इस बार प्रोजेक्टर के माध्यम से उन्हें मेंस्ट्रोपीडिया की मूवी दिखाई जो की काफी लाभप्रद रही। सारी सेविका दीदी ने बहुत अच्छे से देखा और उसे मूवी की हर एक छोटी-छोटी चीजों को समझा और जाना, बाद में मूवी पर बहुत अर्थपूर्ण चर्चा भी हुई। उन्होंने नै यह भी



कहा कि हम गांव की किशोरियों के साथ भी काम करेंगे जो कि कहीं न कहीं छूट जाती है।
Kajal Kumari

सेविका दीदी से बातचीत के दौरान यह पता चला की "उगम द्वारा दिया गया प्रशिक्षण उनके मन में एक नया जोस लाया है और वे चाहते हैं उगम की और से और सहयोग मिले जैसे की बालविवाह, दहेजप्रथा, योनशोषण आदि जैसे विषय पर भी प्रशिक्षण दिया जाए" |
पद्मालया पातर,
पूर्वी सिंहभूम

Our Collaborations



Once the adolescent girls complete their class 12 from KGBV schools, typically they lose touch with their schools. In partnership with the JEPC (Jharkhand Education Project Council) Ugam started collecting data about the KGBV Alumni.

Based on our experience and research that we undertook we realized the importance of creating a strong KGBV Alumni Program. This program will not only help the State track the students, it will be a source of critical learning and support for the alumni and the current students.

Under the guidance and leadership of the JEPC team, work had started in October 2022 to build Jharkhand's KGBV Alumni Program.

The first ever KGBV Alumni program was launched on the **8th of November 2023**.

Empowered young women will catalyse positive change for more girls and schools – this is the bedrock of the program.

KGBV Alumni Program

We share below the journey of the program:

- Step 1:** since October 2022, the program was conceptualised, designed and pilot tested
- Step 2:** a Standard Operation Procedure (SoP) manual was created

Step 3: State level launch in October, 2023

Step 4: Ugam facilitated District level orientation in 17 districts

Step 5: 100 KGBV Schools hold Alumni Meetings, career guidance and motivation sessions with help from Sashakti Fellows

Step 6: Ugam identifies and documents, makes a film high achiever KGBV Alumni

Step 7: The entire journey and future plans are chronicled in a coffee table book called KGBV Alumni Program- झारखंड की अभिनव पहल



Adolescent Health Champions

Our partners, Adolescent Health Champions (AHC), led by Ricky Sharma and Dr Priya Shanker have been a great pillar of strength since 2022.

We are all deeply, deeply saddened by the loss of Ricky in July 2023 in a car accident in Rajasthan. AHC aims to train adolescents as gender and health peer educators. Ricky was a Social Enterprise Fellow and Master in Public Policy candidate at Harvard Kennedy School.

In a true tribute to Ricky and his vision, **Ugam AHC continued the work in Jharkhand with 109 KGBV Schools across 9 districts**. After intense capacity building, Sashakti Fellows facilitated sessions on health and gender education.



Research and Learning

What are the needs of adolescent girls in the communities and how can Ugam address these? What are the current resources available?

These were some of the questions that we wanted answers to.

70 Sashakti Fellows engaged in a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) across 60 villages.

After a 15 hour initial training and daily debriefs and support, they engaged in Village Transact Walks, Resource Mapping, Women Life Cycle Mapping, Priority Maps, discussions, observation and interviews with anganwadi sevikas. Some reflections from the Sashakti fellows

यहां लड़कियों की शादी बहुत जल्दी हो जाती है, और नई बहू को तो घर से बाहर कही जाने की आज़ादी ही नहीं है। साथ ही किशोरियों को भी कही जाने की आज़ादी नहीं है।

मेरी लर्निंग यह हुई कि हमें किसी भी हाल में हार नहीं मानना चाहिए बल्कि कोशिश करनी ही चाहिए।



CSO Connect

We were invited to be a part of the State Level conference on “Whole (holistic) Child Development and its practice in Jharkhand”.

This gathering was organized to bring together organizations working across diverse issues within education and create space for reflection and learning from our collective experiences, to strengthen our efforts in improving learning opportunities for all children in Jharkhand.



FemNet4GTE by UNGEI

In November 2023, the United Nations Girls Education Initiative and Feminist Network for Gender Transformative Education brought together 120+ representatives from 50+ countries to meet in Istanbul for a dynamic two-day event.

Representatives from over 50 countries were selected to attend, bringing lived experience and on-the-ground expertise from around the world.

Ugam was represented by Lopa Gandhi in this wonderfully diverse and meaningful workshop.



C20 Conference

Our founder Lopa Gandhi was invited to the C20 National Conference held in Mumbai on 25th April. The theme was Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.

She spoke about the need for inclusivity and equity in schools and education. With a special focus on the girls in rural Jharkhand.



State level workshop

We were invited to a workshop on “Life Skills, Body Confidence, Wellbeing and Psycho-social Safety initiatives in KGBVs: Reflections and Next Steps” organised by Jharkhand Education Project Council and UNICEF.

Our team of brilliant KGBV Alumni shared their extensive experiences around body positivity, addressing gender norms, future planning, menstrual challenges and the value of support and peer mentoring.

Highlights 2023-2024





Looking Ahead



Ugam enters its tenth year on June 15, 2024.

Over the next one year we plan to deepen and expand our reach to more girls and children.

Strengthening our advocacy effort with more teacher and warden empowerment interventions, ensuring KGBV Alumni become an integral part of every KGBV school and many communities.

One of the needs we have identified is for more mental health first aid support in schools and communities. We will implement our newly designed Mental Health program in KGBVs and based on our learning will finetune our program for scalability.

We will engage in more research that becomes the voice of girls from rural India.

In collaboration with government departments, we are co-creating a scalable model for District Anganwadi Transformation program.

Lastly, none of this would be possible without the support and faith from all of you! As we grow we need for funds and like minded partners for the girls in Jharkhand.

Thank you

We are Thankful to...

We often start our sessions with the song:

साथ चलेंगे साथी, साथ साथ चलेंगे

We wish to show our utmost gratitude to the people who have walked with us....

Aptech Ltd
Marcellus Investment Managers Pvt Ltd.
SNL Bearings Ltd.
ADCL Fafeco Engineering Pvt Ltd
CMS Pvt Ltd
Fluid Control Pvt Ltd
Trust Securities Services Pvt Ltd
Mavuca Capital Advisors Ltd
Soonabai Pirojsha Godrej Foundation
Drishti HR Centre
Mohan Shah Foundation Trust
Trio Foundation
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Asha Parekh Trust
Gandhi & Associates
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Hoshang and Soonoo Netarwala

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Jharkhand State Education
Department team

District Collectors and Education
and Gender Teams

Our wellwishers: Ujwal Thaker,
Sekhar, Paresh, Ramya Rajgopalan,
Shridhar Sethuraman and
the Drishti Team.



Appeal

You have been a great support for us and we thank you for that.

We follow the Martin Luther King quote:

"If you can't fly then run, If you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but Whatever you do you have to keep moving forward."

Support Ugam with donations and spread the word around.

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Set up in 2015 by Lopa Gandhi, **Ugam Education Foundation (Ugam)** is a section 8 not-for-profit organization that educates and empowers girls from rural, vulnerable communities.

Ugam collaborates with existing education systems, leverages resources and communities to transform schools and empower girls defeating all gender based barriers.

Ugam has 12A, 80G and FCRA certification.
CIN: U80904MH2015NPL265577

