

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22



Unleashing the potential of youth for sustainable development



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Message from our Chairman

The year 2021-22 will be remembered for the devastating pandemic which affected every one of us in some way or another. But it hit the YouthInvest family hard when a colleague lost both his parents within a few days and could not even go to cremate them because he was admitted to the hospital with severe Covid. Today he is back heading a young people's development project giving them hope and health. I realized the resilience our colleague showed has strengthened our resolve to face the work challenges resolutely. Despite continued restrictions due to Covid for lengths of time during the year, our team worked in collaboration with the government functionaries to ensure that our programmes in health & nutrition, education and life skills reach the most vulnerable families - particularly children, adolescents and youths - in our field areas across the West Bengal, Jharkhand and Assam.

We have been back at work with our young people. It was gratifying to note that our Sambhawna Learning Centres in Jharkhand enabled 174 girls to graduate from high school and together with mainstreaming of 36 girls in government secondary schools, prevented 210 girls from child marriage despite the disastrous effect of Covid and loss of livelihoods. We are grateful to Sadbhavna Trust, Tata Metaliks CSR, for giving us the support and encouragement to foray into skills training by setting up a rural IT Skills Training Centre in Kalaikunda GP, Kharagpur subdivision, Paschim Medinipur in West Bengal. In 2021-22, this enabled us to provide basic computer skills training to 107 underprivileged youths. 12 students who excelled were chosen for the Tata Strive Skills programme. We hope to expand this job preparedness training further in the coming year.

I would like to extend our thanks and gratitude to our donors and individual supporters for helping us to navigate through the challenging year. We look forward to a more productive and fruitful year ahead with all your best wishes.

Dr. Kaliprasad Pappu
Chairman



About us



YouthInvest Foundation (YouthInvest) is an Indian not-for-profit organization working towards the empowerment of young people, particularly from underprivileged and vulnerable communities. YouthInvest creates and facilitates opportunities that enable young people (10-29 years) to participate in activities that ensure their rights to health, education, and livelihoods.

Mission, vision and approach

Empower young people in reaching their full potential and leading productive lives.

YouthInvest envisions healthy, educated, emotionally well-adjusted and skilled adolescents and youth – especially from disadvantaged and marginalised populations – entering adulthood.

YouthInvest uses a lifecycle programming approach focused on critical life stages, i.e., childhood, adolescence, and youth, to ensure sustainable change.

India's youth population presents a unique demographic advantage. However, millions of underprivileged Indian youths lose out on the chance to realise their full potential and get into a downward spiral of unemployment, poverty and ill-health as they drop out of school and remain outside development programmes.

YouthInvest works with some of the most vulnerable young people in rural, tribal areas of Jharkhand, West Bengal and Assam and urban slums of Kolkata, equipping them for a better future.

Summary

The year 2021-22 has been challenging as we went through another year of living under the threat of Covid-19. However, support from our donors, government, partners, the very resilient community and adolescents, and the continued and tireless efforts of our staff have made it possible for us to achieve quite a few milestones this year.

Highlights

- Despite continued restrictions due to Covid-19, our team managed to reach out to more than 400,000 children under 5 years, young married couples, adolescents and youths through our education & digital literacy, health & nutrition and life skills programmes.
- 174 previous school dropout adolescent girls, studying in YouthInvest's Sambhavana Learning Centres in Ranchi district, Jharkhand successfully passed Secondary Board Examination. 59 of them are currently pursuing higher studies in government intermediate colleges. 10 have enrolled in vocational skills training programmes. A further 36 girls have been successfully mainstreamed into government secondary schools, preventing child marriage for 210 adolescent girls in our Jharkhand project area.
- We successfully demonstrated the "home-based prevention of childhood malnutrition through counselling using a mobile application" approach in 40 Anganwadi Centres in Kamrup and Darrang districts, resulting in amplification of the same in the entire two districts covering all Anganwadi centres by the Department of Social Welfare, Government of Assam.
- Initiation of YouthInvest's first Digital Literacy Centre for underprivileged adolescents and youths in Paschim Medinipur district, West Bengal with support from Sadbhavna Trust, Tata Metaliks Ltd. This year we could provide basic computer skills training to 107 young people, the majority belonging to SC/ST communities. 12 youths have been nominated for participation in the TATA Strive skills training programme.

3 states

West Bengal, Jharkhand,
Assam

OUR REACH IN 2021-22

Education & Digital skills

1000 plus adolescents
and youths

Life skills development

35,000 plus adolescents
and youths

Health & Nutrition

369,057 children under 5
years and young married
couples

Sambhavana Learning Centre



Sambhavana Learning Centre (SLC) is a learning platform for high school dropout adolescent girls and young married women above 15 years to give them a “second chance” to (a) complete secondary education, (b) gain holistic life skills, and (c) learn digital literacy skills. SLCs aim at enabling these adolescent girls and young women to make improved individual, social and professional life choices, and avoid child marriage, early pregnancy and/or trafficking.

YouthInvest currently runs 12 SLCs in rural areas of Jharkhand and West Bengal in eastern India.

Jharkhand

10 SLCs in Ranchi district



- 174 girls successfully passed the Secondary Examination.
- 272 new students have been enrolled after survey and door-to-door visits in 30 villages in the 3 blocks the SLCs are located. It was found that there was a large number of drop-out girls due to school closure for Covid-19.
- YouthInvest conducted 2-phased teachers' training on multi-level multi-grade teaching-learning approach, life skills curriculum and gender integration in SLC teaching & learning.
- Till November 2021, YouthInvest Learning Instructors conducted classes digitally and in small groups due to Covid-related lockdown. Regular classes were held from December onwards in all the SLCs 6-days a week encompassing education, life skills and digital literacy.
- Parent and community engagement activities through home visits, village meetings and various events, such as the celebration of International Women's Day, International Youth Day were held to encourage regular attendance of girls in schools and spread awareness on prevention of child marriage and gender issues.

- In 2021-22, 174 adolescent girls studying in Jharkhand SLCs, the majority from extremely poor families, successfully passed Secondary Board Examination.
- 59 of them are currently pursuing higher studies in government intermediate colleges.
- 10 have enrolled in vocational skills training programmes.

West Bengal

2 SLCs in Paschim Medinipur district

YouthInvest runs 2 SLCs in Paschim Medinipur with support from Sadbhavna Trust, and Tata Metaliks Ltd., covering 2 Gram Panchayat areas.

- 15 adolescent girls and young married women have been registered with Rabindra Mukta Vidyalaya (Secondary Open School Board).
- 28 students new students have been enrolled after household surveys and door-to-door visits.
- YouthInvest conducted teachers' training on multi-level multi-grade teaching-learning approach and life skills curriculum.
- Parent and community engagement activities through home visits, village meetings and various events, such as the celebration of World Literacy Day, and National and International Youth Day were held to encourage regular attendance of girls in schools and spread awareness on the prevention of child marriage and child protection issues.



Sutanara's journey



Sutanara, a 17-year-old girl from Hatma, a tribal village in Mandar block of Jharkhand never thought that she could get a chance to go back to study and fulfil her dreams. Sambhavna Learning Centre gave her the chance to dream again.

Sutanara's life has been full of hardship as she lost both her parents at a young age. As the eldest child, she had to look after her 4 siblings and had to support them financially. She had only a dream of continuing her education, but the situations were not in her favour. After completing middle school, she had to drop out as the high school was far from her village and she did not have the resources to travel daily. But when an SLC started in Hatma, Sutanara immediately enrolled when she got to know that there was no monthly fee to study in SLCs.

To support herself and her siblings, Sutanara continued to work as an agricultural labourer and vegetable seller. For two years, Sutanara used to toil from dawn to dusk to manage all her household chores and work so that she could attend classes regularly. Sutanara was passionate to continue her studies and despite many odds that she had to face, she chose to stay strong and decided not to leave SLC.

Sutanara passed Secondary Board Examination in 2021 and has enrolled in Mandar College to pursue higher studies. She plans to complete graduate studies and get a good job. She also encourages her siblings to complete their studies and has recently enrolled her younger sister in SLC.

Digital Literacy & IT Skills Training Centre

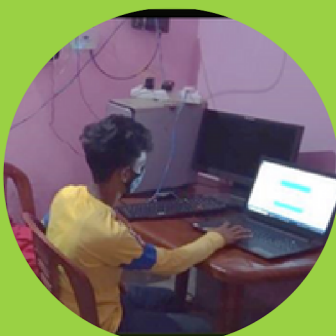
Digital literacy and basic computer skills training program was initiated for underprivileged youths (15-24 years) to engage them meaningfully by improving their productivity and building their skills for enhancing their employment potential leading to a better future.

The basic computer course aims to teach basic level day-to-day application and common office work within 3 months, like MS Office, banking applications, mobile internet uses, Aadhar, Pan and UMANG app registration and their uses.

This year (2021 – 2022), a total of 107 students have completed the certificate course on basic computer skills and digital literacy.



Moyna Mudi, an 18 years old girl from Risha village, studying in class XII joined the digital literacy class. From the very beginning, she was very interested in learning about computers. She is calm by nature but was attentive and regular in class. She did not have much idea about the basics of the computer when she first came to the class. But in a short time, she has learned MS Word, Excel, etc. She feels confident that this training will help in her higher education.



Nabajit Pramanik, a 16-year-old boy from Samraipur, studying in class X, is a regular student in the digital literacy class. He took admission in the Digital Learning Centre and the teacher noticed his interest in learning computers from the very first day. He has now learned MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint and comes to the class early so that he can practice for a longer time. Nabajit feels having IT skills is essential for future studies and jobs, and appreciates that he can learn IT in his village.

Accelerating frontline services for improving reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, adolescent health and nutrition status in West Bengal & Assam through system strengthening

The health and nutrition program aims to prevent child malnutrition and improve the health & nutrition status of adolescents and young married couples. The program is implemented by strengthening the capacity of frontline workers and is implemented in convergence with local schools, Panchayat and Government departments for bringing in social behaviour change on prevention of child marriage and early pregnancy, prevention of early childhood malnutrition, adolescent anaemia prevention and menstrual hygiene management.

Programme area and population coverage

State	District	Population
West Bengal	Kolkata, Howrah, Hooghly	201, 214
Assam	Darrang, Kamrup	807,242



Key strategies

Home-based prevention of malnutrition through improved infant-feeding practices

School and community-based life skills programme for adolescents

Male involvement and couple communication to reduce early pregnancy and increase contraceptive use

Strengthening women's and adolescent groups on critical maternal, child, adolescent health and nutrition

Community-level awareness events and campaigns in collaboration with Panchayats and government departments

West Bengal: major activities



1) Training of Saathi Groups - Training on health and nutrition issues was conducted with 73 community groups in Kolkata, Howrah and Hooghly districts. The objective of the training was to increase knowledge and awareness among the Saathi mothers on critical issues of maternal and child health and nutrition and home-based prevention of childhood malnutrition. A total of 1285 Saathi mothers participated in the training.



2) Saathi Group Meetings - The Community Facilitators organized Saathi Group meetings on issues related to maternal and child health and nutrition using participatory methods. During Covid, period awareness was conducted on hand washing, cleanliness, proper ventilation, avoiding crowds, use of masks and Covid vaccination. 349 meetings were conducted with 2860 Saathi mothers.



3) Newly Married Couple Ceremony - The newly married couple ceremony is conducted to start a dialogue between the newly married couples and create awareness among them and other family members regarding delaying the first pregnancy and spacing the subsequent pregnancies. This year, 77 newly married couple ceremony has been conducted in Kolkata, Howrah and Hooghly districts.



4) Pushti Mela (Nutrition Demonstration Camp) - Pushti Mela is organized in the intervention areas twice a year to create mass awareness on low-cost nutritious food and hygienic behaviour during child feeding among pregnant women and mothers with small children. The topics covered in the mela include handwashing, washing vegetables before cutting, preparing low-cost nutritious complementary food from locally available vegetables at home, maintaining hand hygiene before eating, nutritious recipes for children, the importance of tri-colour food ingredients, feeding practices for children, etc. This year 146 Pushti Mela was conducted in 66 AWCs of Kolkata, Howrah and Hooghly districts, where 3532 community members and 178 service providers participated.

5) Home visit and targeted counselling on maternal and child nutrition - YouthInvest together with Anganwadi Workers and Sathi group members conducted targeted counselling through home visits of pregnant and lactating mothers and their family members using a mobile app “Swasthya Poshan Alaap”. 307 pregnant women, 304 mothers having children less than 2 years and 343 parents whose children were moderate or severe underweight were counselled.

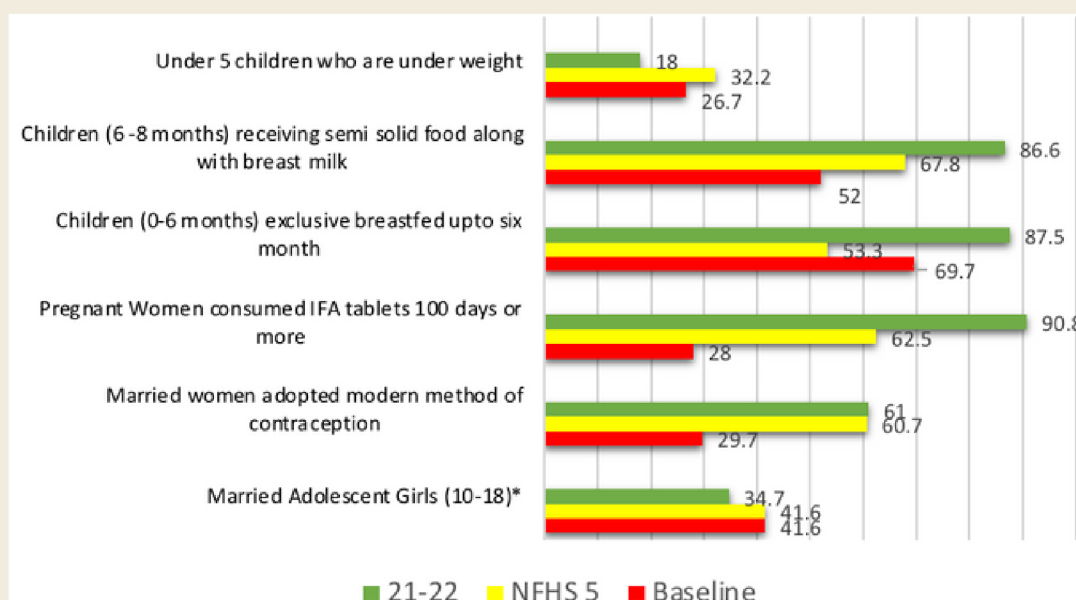
6) Adolescent programme and celebration of Special Events - 14,916 adolescents were covered through community as well as school programmes. National Youth Day was celebrated on 12th January through quiz competitions and campaigns by adolescents where 1103 adolescent boys and girls participated. International Women’s Day was celebrated on 8th March to spread awareness of violence against women, women’s rights and empowerment. YouthInvest oriented AWWs on these topics and conducted mike campaigns covering 14,916 adolescents and 1,92,602 population.

7) Group sessions with married males - 287 group sessions with 761 married males were conducted to increase male involvement in family health and nutrition issues. The session topics included family planning, hygiene basics, and Maternal and child health.

8) Awareness campaigns on gender and child marriage - In collaboration with the Panchayats, a mike campaign was organized to sensitize the community on prevention of child marriage, health and nutrition issues, Covid vaccination etc.



Changes in outcome



Assam: major activities



1) District-level learning-sharing workshops on home-based prevention of malnutrition - Learning-sharing workshops were conducted at the block level with ICDS, Health, Education and PRI officials along with CDPOs and AWWs in Kamrup and Darrang districts. Learning sharing workshops were conducted on Home-based Prevention of Malnutrition where 6227 Anganwadi Supervisors, Anganwadi workers and elected panchayat members participated in 4 such sessions.



2) Capacity building of the Anganwadi Supervisors and Anganwadi workers (AWW) - YouthInvest supported district The Anganwadi supervisors and AWWs were trained on home-based prevention of malnutrition. Hand-holding support on the use of various SBCC tools, like Swasthya Poshan Alaap, counselling handbook, nutrition tri colour flag, etc, for counselling beneficiaries in the field was also provided. This year 93 such training were conducted in which 5177 Supervisors and AWWs participated.



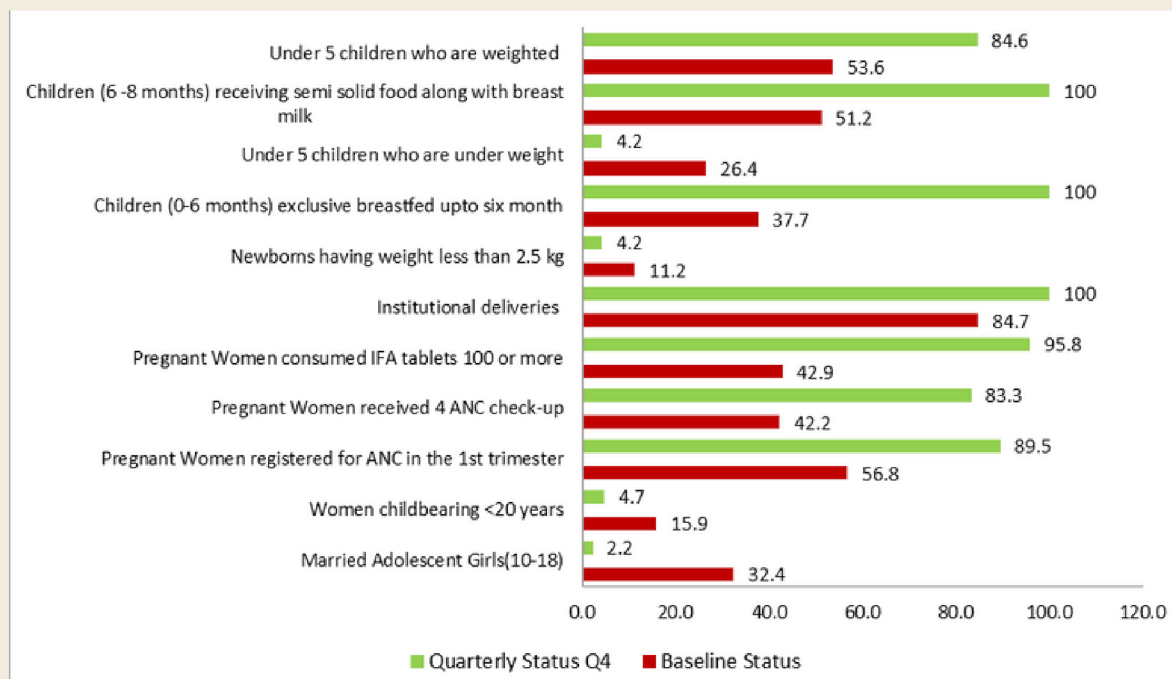
3) Awareness campaigns on health and nutrition - Awareness campaigns were held on 4 special days in collaboration with Gram Panchayats, which are as follows.

- **World Menstrual Health Day:** The menstrual health day was celebrated by miking in both the districts to raise awareness on issues related to menstrual hygiene and diseases that may occur due to poor menstrual hygiene management.
- **World Breastfeeding Week:** Awareness was generated in both the districts for celebrating breast feeding week from 2nd to 7th August by miking to generate awareness on the importance of breast feeding among the community.
- **National Nutrition Week:** Poshan Maah was celebrated at block level in both the districts, from 7 September 2021. The celebration included events like miking, nutritional demonstration camps and recipe demonstration camps.



4) Adolescent programme - Awareness sessions were conducted with adolescents' girls on anaemia prevention, menstrual health and menstrual hygiene management through miking in the community and quiz competition at schools for creating awareness in both the districts. A total of 15,520 adolescents were covered through these programmes.

Changes in outcome



Barsha's story

Barsha Pramanick was born as a premature baby on 10th July 2021 in the Government hospital in Howrah district, West Bengal with 1.4 kg weight and was admitted for resuscitation at SNCU for the first 4 days. After one month the child still weighed 1.4 kg, was very weak and not unable to suck breast milk. Her mother started feeding her formula milk as suggested by her in-laws and neighbours. The child would mostly sleep, though she was moving her limbs and trying to open her eyes. The mother was very depressed, unhappy and feeling helpless as her in-laws started blaming her for everything. She was convinced that she was not producing enough breast milk to feed her child and her daughter would not survive.

The YouthInvest Facilitator identified that the baby was unable to suck breast milk and thus was not getting enough nutrition. The mother was assisted to express her breast milk in a sterilized "jhinuk bati" (spoon & bowl) and feed the child. The child immediately consumed the milk as if she was hungry for a decade! The mother was asked to repeat the process a few times more to help her become familiar with the process. The child consumed the milk, all of it and went to sleep. Barsha's mother was then counselled to help her regain confidence that her breast milk is enough for her child and the baby can never get more nutrition from any other food. Gradually the child started to suck breastmilk on her own and the mother was advised to stop feeding her with "jhinuk bati" and the mother gained confidence to breastfeed her. Regular home-visit by Anganwadi Worker and YouthInvest Facilitator motivated her to continue breastfeeding.

Gradually the child gained weight and within six months, from 1.4 kg birth weight (severely underweight) the child weighted 6.1 kg weight (normal weight).



Life skills development and ARSH



Life skills programme for adolescents



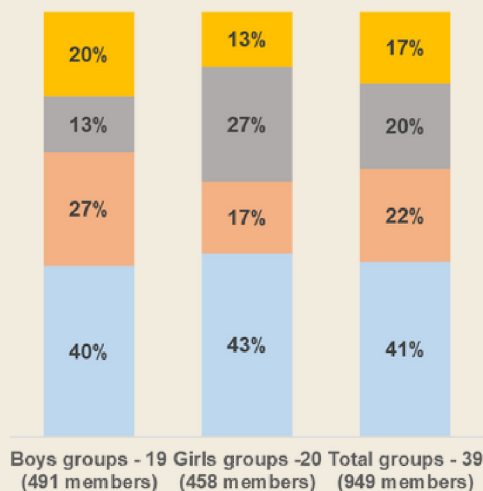
YouthInvest considers life skills to be foundational and essential for adolescents and youths in understanding, negotiating, and mediating everyday challenges and risks, and preparing them for adulthood as responsible, healthy, emotionally, and socially adept, enterprising, and productive citizens.

The YouthInvest “Skills for Life Programme” integrates social and emotional skills; awareness of reproductive and sexual health & rights; and 21st century skills such as digital & IT skills, communications skills etc. that are critical to adolescents and their later lives. The life skills programme is conducted through school as well as community-based sessions.

Community-based sessions on life skills and ARSH in Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal

YouthInvest has formed 39 active adolescent groups in 20 villages in 4 No. Kalaikunda Gram Panchayat and 7 No. Barkola Gram Panchayat, Kharagpur – I Block in Paschim Midnapur district of West Bengal. These groups have with 949 group members with 3-4 adolescents identified as group leaders. YouthInvest Facilitator conducted monthly group sessions on health and nutrition, menstrual hygiene management, gender and rights awareness, life skills and youth leadership.

Group members act as community resource groups and have conducted various youth-led awareness events on health, education and child including prevention of child marriage in the area.



Life skills development and ARSH



5) Youth Festival: Annual Youth Festival was conducted on 23rd March 2022 at Krishnanagar Jr. High School premises, where more than 400 adolescent boys and girls and their parents participated. Stakeholders and leaders such as Panchayat members and School teachers were also present at the event where there was a medley of cultural and infotainment events conducted by the adolescents, such as the Rangoli competition and Poster making competition, song, recitation, and drama on social awareness issues such as child marriage, need for education, substance abuse etc. . There was a science exhibition where adolescents presented science models and a handicrafts exhibition by adolescents and young women. Representatives of Tata Metaliks CSR, Panchayet Pradhan of 4 No kalaikunda, School Managing Committee member and representatives of YouthInvest Foundation and other community leaders were present at the event.



6) Awareness through miking and leaflet distribution: In 20-21, community awareness campaigns were conducted on the prevention of child marriage and the importance of girls' education through toto miking and leaflet distribution. Through this campaign, YouthInvest reached approximately 32,151 population in 43 villages in Kalaijunda and Barkola GP. During this campaign, the staff of YouthInvest Foundation arranged pocket meetings in all villages to discuss the harmful effects of child marriage, and inform them about the various government schemes to promote girls' education and prevent child marriage.

- In 2021-22, YouthInvest could prevent 4 child marriages in project areas of Paschim Medinipur district. 1 girl who was a member of adolescent girls group herself stood up and prevented her parents from marrying her off.
- 15 students of SLCs, who previously dropped out of school, have registred with Ravindra Mukta Vidyalaya, Government of West Bengal, for Secondary Exam to be conducted in 2022.

Youth-led awareness and advocacy initiatives

Various youth-led activities were undertaken in the current year (2021 – 2022) to improve awareness and skills related to health, nutrition, gender-egalitarian issues and life skills among adolescents and young people (15 – 24 years). Different cultural and social awareness programs conducted in participation of young people, which were led by adolescent and youth group leaders.



1) Celebration of International Youth Day – International Youth Day was celebrated on the 12th August 2021 in Paschim Medinipur district to raise awareness regarding youth issues and make them aware of social and environmental concerns. This year, 42 adolescent leaders participated in the event and the theme of the day was “Transforming Food Systems: Youth Innovation for Human and Planetary Health”. The wall magazine and posters prepared by the students of Samraipur SLC students and the adolescent boys’ group of Risha on ‘Food System’, were released. There were cultural programmes, such as chorus songs, recitation, dance, and drawing competition on ‘Covid awareness’ by adolescents. A group discussion on “Homemade food vs junk food”, “conventional farming vs organic farming” and “Child Marriage” was also held. A drama on ‘Organic Farming’ was held and a quiz contest was organized.



2) Celebration of World Literacy Day: The World Literacy Day was celebrated on 9th September 2021 at Raipara Community Hall. The theme this year was “Literacy for a human-centred recovery: Narrowing the digital divide”. The ceremony began by welcoming the honourable guests and prayer song followed by valuable remarks about the special day from the guests. Cultural programmes like dance, recitation, etc. were performed by the SLC students and other adolescents. The Risha adolescent boys’ group shared some models like air cooler and vacuum cleaner made from waste materials. A debate competition was held on ‘digitalization of modern education’ and a quiz contest was organized. At the end of the programme, the esteemed guests handed over the prizes to the winner.



3) Awareness rally – As part of community awareness programme, 2 awareness rallies were conducted on social issues like child marriage, right to education, health and hygiene, malnutrition, water conservation, safe and healthy environment, etc. The rally covered 6 villages where 300 adolescents actively participated.



4) Stakeholder Meetings: Stakeholder sensitization meetings were conducted with the panchayet members of 4 No. Kalaikunda Gram Panchayat on 13th December 2021. The objective of the meeting was to share the project components and make future plans for the next years. Panchayet members, Tata Metaliks CSR team, YouthInvest team and 35 youth leaders participated in the meeting.

List of publications & resources



	Name	Language	Description
1	Poshan Alaap: Counselling handbook on breastfeeding and complementary feeding	Bengali Assamese	A counselling handbook for frontline workers to conduct case-specific counselling to reduce childhood malnutrition and improve child survival and growth
2	SwasthyaPoshan Alaap	Bengali Assamese Hindi English	Mobile application for use of frontline workers focusing on maternal, child and adolescent health & nutrition
3	Flipchart on Male Involvement in Gender, Health & Nutrition	Bengali English	Flipchart for group meetings with men to generate awareness about men's gender roles, couple communication, family planning, and care of pregnant women and under 5 children
4	Capacity Building Guide: Conducting Learning sharing workshop with District level master trainers	English	Training manual for capacity building of District Master Trainers to provide training and support to the ICDS Supervisors on home-based prevention of malnutrition (HBPM) for continuous capacity building of Anganwadi Workers (AWW) and data-driven action planning to address malnutrition
5	Facilitator's Guide: Training for capacity building of ICDS Supervisors	English	Training manual for District Trainers on capacity strengthening of ICDS Supervisors on HBPM, strengthening supportive supervision for continuous capacity building of AWWs and data-driven action planning to prevent malnutrition
6	Facilitator's Guide - Training for capacity building of Anganwadi Workers	Assamese English	Training manual on capacity building of Anganwadi on home-based counselling to improve infant & child feeding practices
7	Flyer on Home-based prevention of underweight children	Assamese English	Flyer on the strategy of home-based counselling strategy for the prevention of underweight children
8	Recipe book on complementary feeding	Assamese English	This book contains easy homemade nutritious recipes for children between 6 months to 2 years

	Name	Language	Description
9	Boyoshondhikalin Poriborton: Kishori meyeder jonnyo kichu Katha	Bengali	Information booklet for adolescent girls on correct and complete information on growing up, menstrual hygiene, nutritional well-being and gender & rights
2	Digital Literacy Concepts	Bengali English	Booklet on digital Literacy basic concepts for everyday life
3	Flipchart on Male Involvement in Gender, Health & Nutrition	Bengali English	Flipchart for group meetings with men to generate awareness about men's gender roles, couple communication, family planning, and care of pregnant women and under 5 children
4	Video series	Bengali Hindi	Short communication videos on 1. Menstrual hygiene management 2. Pubertal changes for adolescent boys 3. Consequences of early marriage 4. WASH & disease prevention



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WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT.

The YouthInvest team expresses sincere gratitude and appreciation for all our donors, collaborators, Panchayat members, government officials, adolescents and youths, parents and community members, for standing by and providing unwavering support in all our endeavours, particularly during the pandemic.



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