



THOUGHTSHOP
FOUNDATION
ANNUAL REPORT

1516

Thoughtshop Foundation was registered under the Societies Act on March 17, 1993. The organisation comprises of professionals dedicated to creating new and effective ways of dealing with social issues, with the aim to educate, motivate and empower for social change. Over the last twenty two years, our work has evolved; it has given us an opportunity to examine diverse, developmental issues.

Social Communications

Research, Development, Design and Training

On our own initiative, as well as in partnership with other organisations, we develop behaviour change communication strategies, community friendly tools and training software. Field Research involving our users and audiences is integral to the development process. Development is both innovation and improvement. Every communication tool is field tested before dissemination. We keep track of feedback and how to improve our products with each new edition. Finally we train field workers on how to best use the tools to ensure that the total communication is clear, convincing and enjoyable.

Outreach: Youth Development

Action Research, Community Building, Workshops and Trainings

We believe in the potential of young people to become agents of social change. Holistic development of young people has been a sustained theme in most of our work. For the past 9 years we have been creating youth leaders who build value based youth organisations as models for sustainable youth and community development.

Cover Photo: Adolescents at YRC Drishtikon play with the Jigsaw tool to learn about Women Who Broke Stereotypes, part of the Adolescent Support Group Gender & Rights curriculum.

2015 -16 brought it with it new energy and new linkages. Three important new partnerships fructified. American Jewish World Service came forward to support our work with YRCs to build Gender Equal Communities. DK-Austria also committed to supporting our work with adolescents in YRC communities for a 3 year period. We partnered with Azad Foundation to bring the *Women on Wheels* Programme to Kolkata. In 2015-16 we mobilised 36 women from YRC communities to become the first professional women drivers in Kolkata.

Our 3 year project *Building Youth Action Groups for Facilitating Right To Education Act 2009*, with IndienHilfe (2014-17) continued to strengthen 8 Youth Action Groups created by us across remote areas.

Additionally we had the opportunity to invite different outstation facilitators to Kolkata and create rich learning opportunities for our youth.

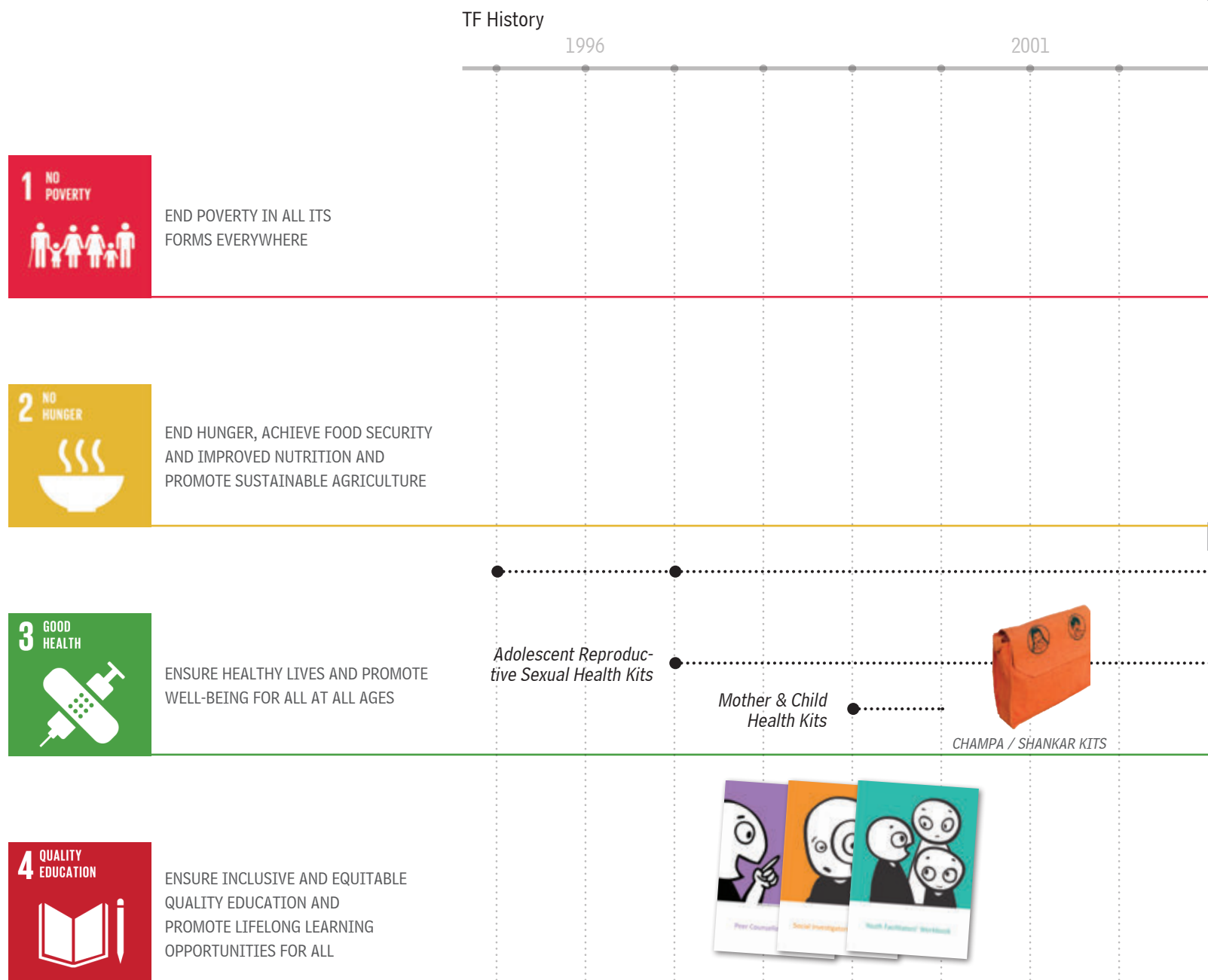
In the Social Communications wing, we continued to work on projects initiated the previous year on land rights and food security – both for tribal communities in eastern India. During the year language versions were created and tool kits for both these were produced and disseminated. We also worked on creating a range of tools to facilitate mobilisation of *Women on Wheels* and promote gender equality in communities.

In another collaboration with Oxfam GB we conceived and facilitated the second *#YouthUnite* workshop that engaged diverse youth representatives from 6 countries across Asia and Middle East.



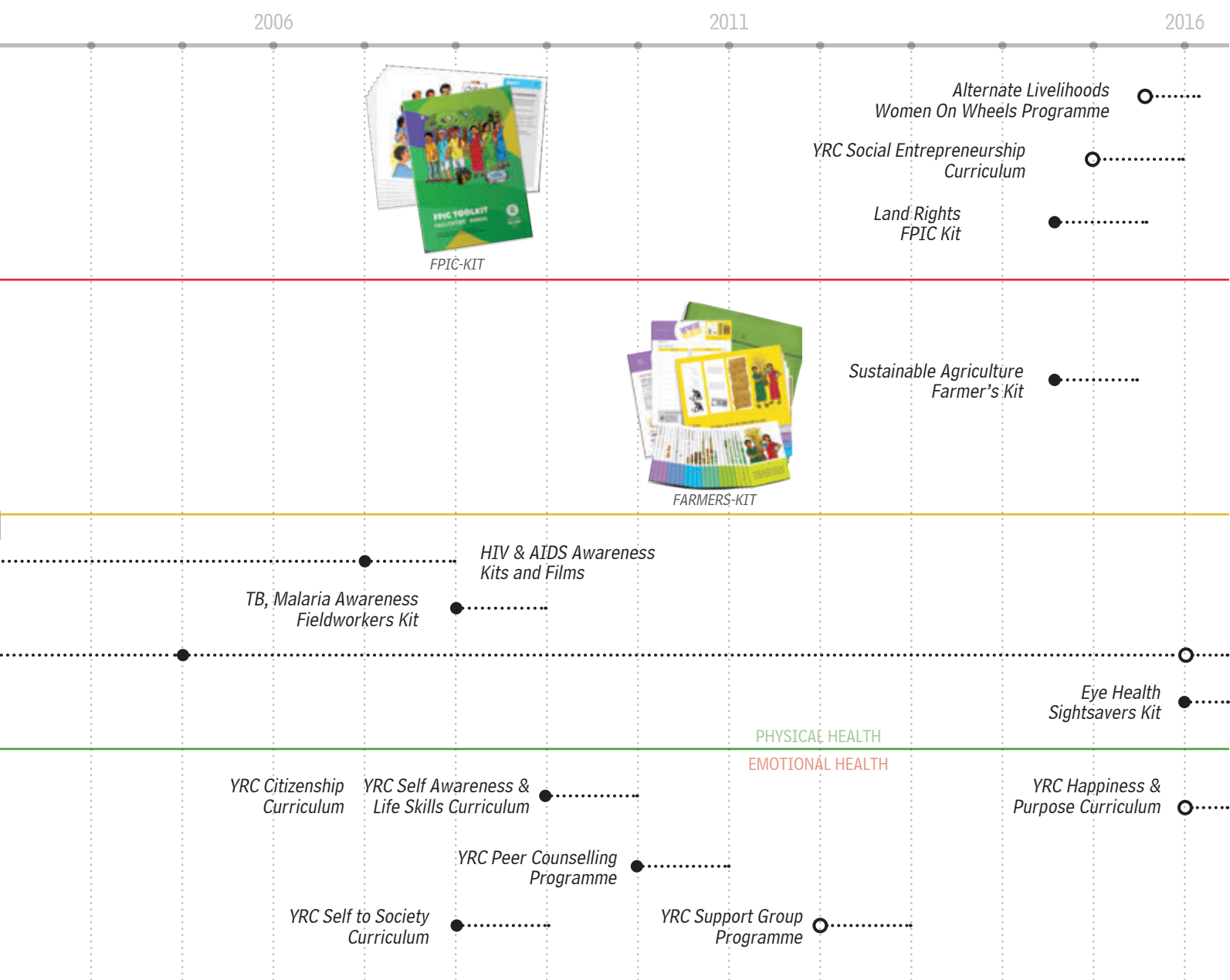
The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, established in 2000), were eight international development goals for the year 2015. On 25 September 2015, MDGs were replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the new global agenda to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030.

This year we revisit the body of work by TF done over the last two decades to see how the different projects map together in this new SDG framework. In the following spreads, we have mapped two types of development work at TF:



●..... This indicates development and continued application of interactive toolkits. Toolkits are structured workshop processes packaged into a comprehensive pictorial or game format. They empower grassroots workers or peer educators to rapidly start work on specific development issues. Of these, projects that involved multiple stages of development over several years are marked with longer trails.

○..... This indicates development and continued application of processes such as programme design, curricula or institutional systems. Some of these processes may eventually get resolved into toolkits.



TF History

1996

2001



ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS



GVAW KIT



ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL



WATSAN WORKBOOK



REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES



CHILD RIGHTS GAME

Child Rights Kit



MAKE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE



PROTECT AND RESTORE ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABLY MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION, REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION AND HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS

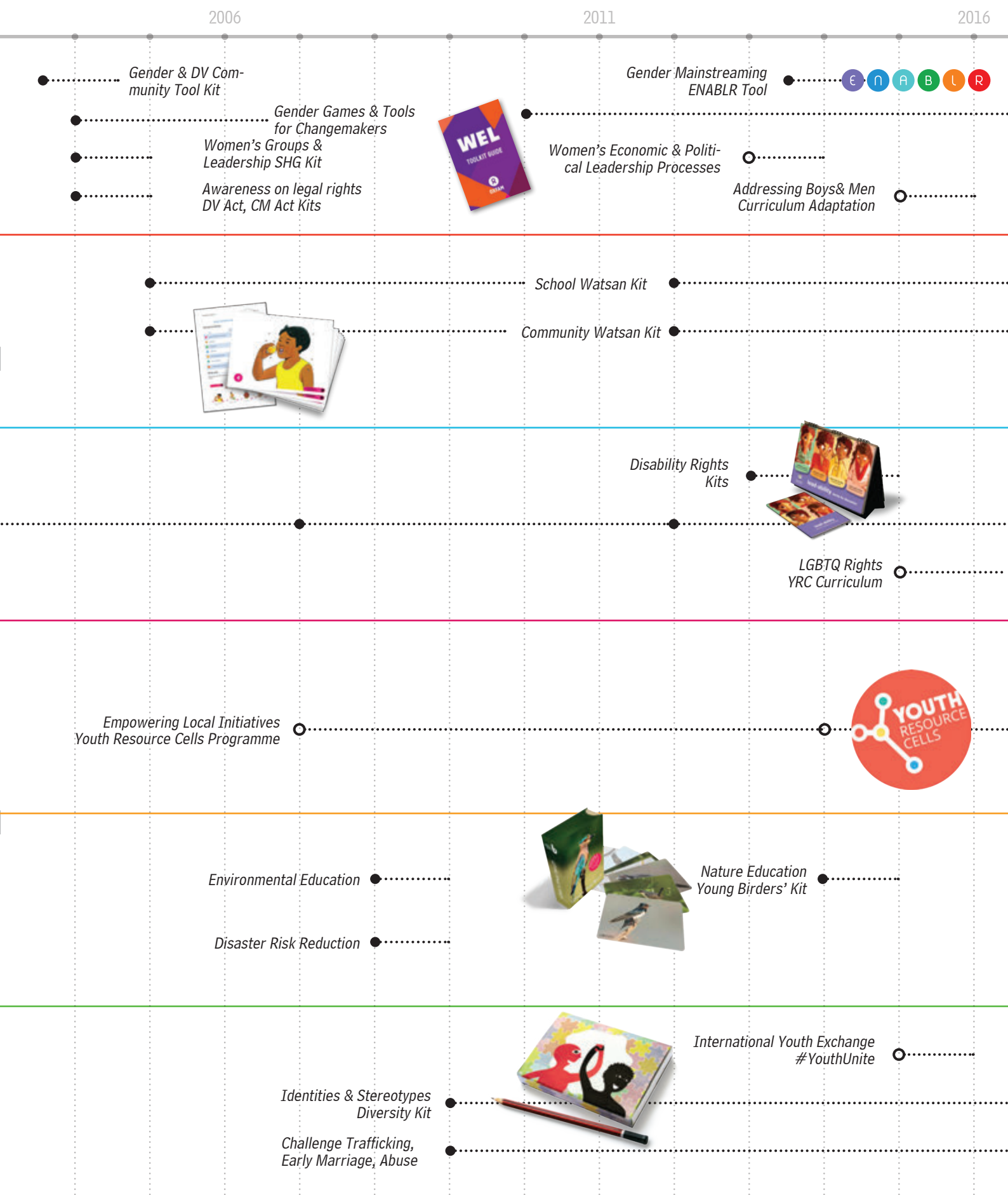
Natural Resource Conservation
Biogas Promotion Kit



PROMOTE PEACEFUL, INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS



NO MARRIAGE NOW
WORKBOOK



#YouthUnite2: International Leadership Exchange Programme

In collaboration with Oxfam GB Asia

#YouthUnite is a forum to support young people working for social change in contexts where identity based divisions, discrimination and violence are a key problem. It provides an opportunity for young leaders to interact, learn and be inspired by peers from other countries addressing similar challenges with a framework of equality and nonviolence.

This year the second #YouthUnite event was facilitated by the TF team. Participants came from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Lebanon, Jordan, Philippines, Nepal and Thailand. Three youth leaders from YRCs got the opportunity to travel to Bangkok to represent Team India.

Developing Youth Resource Cells

Youth Resource Cells (YRCs) developed by TF have been working towards supporting vulnerable young people, especially girls, in the peri-urban, urban slums and remote rural locations of West Bengal. Girls in these communities are valued less and particularly vulnerable; they are victims of gender discrimination and violence; their Rights to survival, protection, development and participation, are violated.

The YRC model attempts to evolve a sustainable and community based approach to address gender inequality and reach out to the most vulnerable adolescents in the community enabling them to grow up as active citizens.

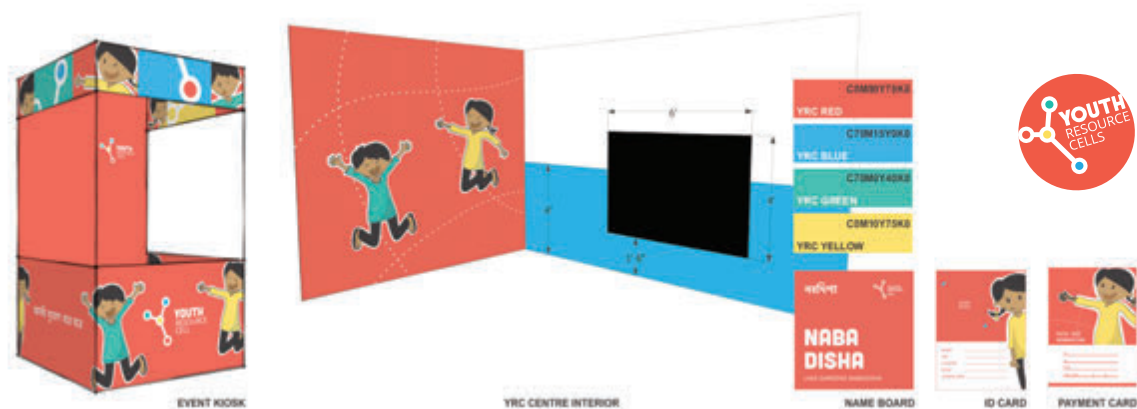
Over 2015-16 three new partnerships developed with American Jewish World Service (AJWS), DKA and Azad Foundation which helped TF and the YRCs get closer to the vision of Youth Resource Cells and their impact in communities.

During the year TF also worked with Design Volunteers to create a Visual Identity for YRCs.

Capacity Building of YRC Core Teams

The partnership with AJWS focussed on strengthening capacities of YRC core teams to address gender issues and challenge root causes of child marriage and gender inequality. Over the year many new linkages took place and TF and YRCs got to interact with facilitators from





CREA, Point of View, TISS, Rainbow Pride Walk Group (LGBTIQ teams).

Capacity Building sessions focussed on gender and sexuality training for YRC core teams. TF also worked with external consultants to initiate trainings on Social Entrepreneurship with mature YRCs.

Gender Audit conducted by 10 YRCs in their community helped raise gender related issues that are still unclear for the YRCs, the young people and the community. 120 members from the 10 YRCs participated in the gender audits conducted at each of the YRC locations with core group members, peer leaders, parents, community members, women drivers. Participants were between the ages of 14 to 35. 90% participants were women and girls.

Development of Adolescent Support Groups

The partnership with DK Austria focuses on our work with adolescents; ensuring Child Rights, especially the right to protection, development and participation of vulnerable adolescents through community based YRCs.

Over the year all 10 YRCs consolidated their work with adolescents, forming Adolescent Support Groups (ASG) in the YRC communities, identifying and training Peer Leaders from the ASGs, Conducting awareness workshops on self-exploration, life skills, gender, child rights,

Facing page from top #YouthUnite participants workout, #YouthUnite Identities Game; CREA workshop on Gender & Sexuality, Workshop at TF on LGBTIQ issues.

This page from top YRC Visual Identity; Parents meeting at YRC Swapno, Namkhana; Storybox with Adolescents at YRC Drishtikon, Dumdum; Self Exploration at YRC Hashi Khushi, Mandirbazar.

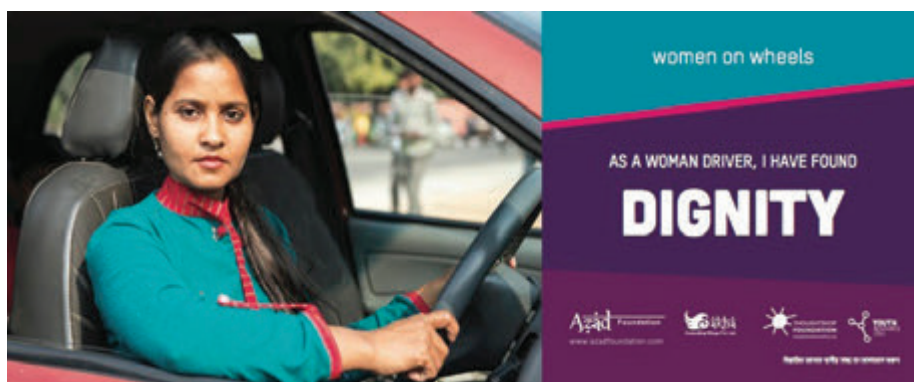
and, most importantly, setting up and maintaining a **Child Tracking Database**. YRCs were also trained to work with parents of adolescents through home visits and workshops.

Women on Wheels

TF partnered with Azad Foundation to bring *Women on Wheels* to Kolkata. The programme trains resource-poor women to become professional chauffeurs and successful trained women are provided employment. It was an exciting project for TF and the YRCs because it took us one step closer to our vision of building gender equal communities.

TF partnered with 10 YRCs to reach out to 1044 women through one-to-one meetings, and about 800 women through community events. 200 women showed interest in the programme and registered. Eventually, 37 women and girls enrolled for the WOW training overcoming many barriers; violence and inequalities at their homes and community.

Tools and training resources created by TF helped the mobilisation process in different ways, brought in standardised and consistent messaging and built credibility of the Programme in West Bengal.





This page from top members from YAG Nabasanjibani (Midnapore) engaging with school and community, Sex & Gender game at YAG Pradarshak, Basalata facilitating Exploring My World with her adolescent support group.

Facing page from top prospective trainees playing with the jigsaw game at a wow mobilisation event, driving simulation, Jigsaw tool, other WOW communication tools.

Through the partnership with IndienHilfe e.V. Germany, TF has been building the capacities of 8 Youth Action Groups (YAGs) spread across different districts in West Bengal.

2015-16 was a significant year for the YAGs as the remaining 5 YAGs also got registered under the Societies Act. This helped YAGs develop into Community Based Organization with defined Vision and Values.

Each YAG creates clusters of children, and each cluster is supported by up to 3 YAG members. Members work with children and adolescents on emotional health, and provide support to overcome vulnerabilities.

YAG members prevent school dropouts. All 8 YAGs reach schools with focus on creating Gender Equal communities. School children are taken through a short module on equal opportunities for boys and girls. They also link with school to prevent child rights violations in the community specially preventing drop-outs and child marriage.

In 2015-16, 8 YAGs collectively reached 1132 adolescents, who were organised into 37 clusters and met at regular intervals. Over the year YAGs prevented 26 children from dropping out of school, and 5 child marriages.

I was a shy introverted child and always afraid. My greatest achievement being in a group is that now I am able to talk to people fearlessly.

I get a lot of importance in the community now. Parents encourage their children to come for cluster meetings and study support. I love the cluster meetings with the children and enjoy being with them. They also treat me as a peer and not as a Didi!

We've been able to prevent several school drop outs. But even now girls are married early. We talk about such issues with the children and they share their feelings openly.

Basalata Singh
YAG Nabadiganta, West Midnapore



Impact of Youth Resource Cells 2015-16

Mobilised Adolescents to join YRCs	Formed Adolescent Support Groups	Held Support Group Sessions	Acted upon Warning Signs
1857 ¹	53	1965	590
Challenged Child Marriage/ Trafficking	Prevented Early/Forced Child Marriage	Admitted to School	Prevented school dropouts
31 ²	19	14	36
Provided Emotional Support Sessions	Enabled Girls to say NO to violence	Enabled Girls to increase mobility	Enabled increased gender equity in family
262	18	18	26
Influenced Women to Explore Livelihood	Enabled Women join non-stereotypical livelihood	Influenced Parents through Workshops & Meets	Enabled Parents to promote Child Rights
994	46	801	89

¹ 1025 Girls, 825 Boys

² 29 ECM, 2 Trafficking interventions



Sunita Munda

Commercial Driver, YRC Alor Sandhan, 19 years

I live in Dum Dum with my brother, sister and parents. I have studied up to class 5. My father is a rickshaw puller and my mother is a daily labourer. I work in people's homes to make ends meet. As a child I would see my father drive his rickshaw, and I too wanted to drive. I wanted to do something to be able to support my family.

In my area there is a local youth group called YRC Alor Sandhan, it is from them that I heard of the Women on Wheels training. I knew immediately that I wanted to do this. My mother was hesitant and didn't agree initially. She felt this was not okay for a girl. She told the YRC member who was trying to convince me "Neither does Sunita know roads well nor is she smart enough to be a chauffeur." My father however encouraged me. And the YRC leader Pinky did not give up. She told us how this training would help me transform my life and she helped my parents clarify all their doubts.

Eventually I joined the training. I attended all the classes and especially enjoyed Self Defence and Gender awareness classes where we were taught about the women rights.

My dream is to support my siblings and my aged parents. I'm not thinking of marriage now. I will marry someone who respects me and my profession when the time is right.

After successfully completing the training, I now have a job with a vehicle company where I give test drives to potential buyers of vehicles. My family is very happy. Now my mother exclaims with joy "I had never imagined that Sunita will get such a good job!" I am probably the first professional woman driver in my community!

Rajnandini Jha

YRC Youth Voice, 13 years

I have my parents, younger sister, brother and me in my family. My mother works at people's homes, and my father is a driver.

I live in VIP Nagar, which is not a good place to live in. If I speak with even a younger boy people start spreading rumours. If women go out a lot, people take it badly.

I remember my grandma always ill-treated my mother because she was a Bihari and not a Bengali. She would give her stale food and complain to my father about her. My father would believe grandma and beat up my mother. I used to feel so bad for her. I would save some of my share of the food to give to my mother.

I was 12 years old when on Kali Puja there was a big commotion in our community because of me. I was seen with a boy I like. People in my neighbourhood hit the boy and it soon became a community fight. I became a bad girl, and our family was isolated in the community. Community members felt that I should be married off as soon as possible.

A day after that incident my father's friend brought a proposal of marriage, between me and his brother. My father agreed. The groom was even older than my father. He was 40 years old had two kids from his previous marriage.

I was a member of YRC Youth Voice, and a peer leader. I got a lot of support from Youth Voice and Anjanadi. Anjanadi spoke many times to my mother, and guided her and me. Other Youth Voice members also explained to my mother and neighbours, I was a child and I was too young to be married. My mother knew this was

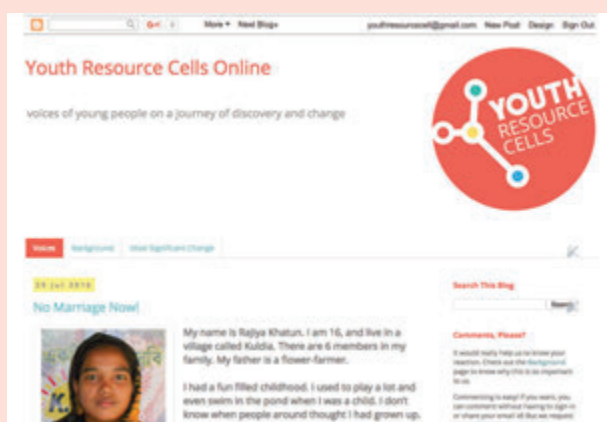


wrong, but she did not have the power to stop it for sure. So she made a backup plan that if the marriage could not be stopped then we should inform Anjana about the wedding date so that on that day, the group could come and stop the wedding legally. Other parents said that I should stop going to the group. Youth Voice members held a meeting in which the other peer leaders all agreed to support me irrespective of the community decision.

After this my father got really angry. He left home and stayed away for two days. He also blackmailed me and my mother saying that if I did not marry that man, he will leave my mother. I did not want that to happen so I agreed at first. Finally because of Youth Voice and my mother, we were able to convince my father and say No to the marriage.

My dream is to be an English teacher. From my childhood school aunties used to inspire me a lot. I used to observe them more than I used to study.

My message is that there will be different kind of problems in life but believe in yourself. It is important to share your dreams and feelings with your mother. If we don't share our dreams sometimes our parents don't know what we want. Because of this incident my family now knows my dream.



onlineyrc.blogspot.in

The blog initiated in 2012 to enable young people associated with YRCs to share their stories saw 10 new posts this year. These are stories are part of an ongoing process to address issues of self awareness, ability to reflect, analyse and express; of the need to build a digital bridge to a world that exist beyond the lanes of the neighbourhood.



Happenings

Facing page from top



- **JUNE 2015** Participants from eight north-eastern NGOs at Guwahati, at a workshop on tools developed by TF
- Student volunteers from SUAS, Ireland interact with youth from YRCs using the Identities Game
- **AUGUST** A three member team from SUAS conducts Workshops at YRC *Swapno*, Namkhana
- News Report of the launch of the FPIC Kit developed by TF, Chhattisgarh.

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- **OCTOBER** YRC adolescents at a football camp organised by *Daanotsav*
- **JANUARY 2016** Storytelling Festival at TF
- **MARCH** Gender workshop by *Pramada Menon*
- Digital Storytelling workshop by *Point of View* Mumbai
- Banner with the first batch of women drivers, from the Launch of *Women on Wheels* in Kolkata



Governing Body

Mira Kakkar President
Dr. Satadal Saha Secretary
Manav Raychaudhuri Treasurer
Veena Lakhumalani Member
Ashok Chatterjee Member
Jeeja Ghosh Member
Lipi Roychowdhury Member
Virendra Nath Varma Advisor
Sonali Ojha Advisor

Team

Kakali Patra Kitchen
Gobindo Halder Maintenance
Dilip Chakraborty Store & Office Manager
Tishya Mukhopadhyay MIS
Binita Chakraborty Programme Support
Lopamudra Dey Programme Support
Sahana Nag Counsellor
Revathi Banerjee Programme Coordinator
Santayan Sengupta, Himalini Varma Directors

Accounts & Audit

Acc-Tax Services Accounts
Agarwal DK & Company Auditor

YRC Core Teams & Facilitators

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Shampa, Shahina, Tahsina, Shama, Sangita, Monalisa,
Pinky, Duragmoni, Jhuma, Azhar, Salaudin, Rakibul, Ta-
jrul, Piyali, Gaurango, Pronoy, Moumita, Sabita, Susmita,
Indrani, Sujan, Surojit, Priya, Samrat

Resource Persons

Gautum Chattopadhyay Illustration
Urbi Bhaduri Translation
Sreela Bose Storytelling

Dhrupad Hazra Happiness & Motivation

Prachi Jain Research

Pramada Menon, Crea Team, Pawan Dhall, Aparna Ban-
nerjee Gender & Sexuality

Start Up Team Social Entrepreneurship

Sumit Lai Roy Work Readiness

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National Institute of Design Ahmedabad; Noor Sengupta,
Srishti Institute of Art Design & Technology Bangalore;
Neha Pandit, Pramod Kumar, Xavier Institute of Man-
agement & Entrepreneurship Kochi; Mihika Bannerjee,
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Cassidy, Patrick James Moss, Diarmuid, Chris Claffey,
Suas Team, Ireland

Print and Production

Pullock Gupta, Partha Mitra

Organisational Partners

Oxfam GB, Oxfam India, Sir Ratan Tata Trust, Indien
Hilfe, American Jewish World Service, DK- Austria, Azad
Foundation, PCMC Trust, Collectives for Integrated Live-
lihoods Initiative (CInI)

Outreach Partners

Youth Resource Cells, Youth Action Groups: West
Bengal ► Kolkata ► Lake Gardens ► YRC Ujaan, YRC
Nabadisha, YAG Prodorshak VIP Nagar ► YRC Youth
Voice Rajabazar ► YRC Roshni South 24 Parga-
nas ► Namkhana ► YRC Swapno Bishnupur ► YRC
Pratibha Mograhat ► YRC KYP Mandirbazar ► YRC
Hashi Kushi Hoi Choi North 24 Parganas ► Dumdum
► YRC Drishtikon, YRC Alor Sandhan Swarupnagar
► YAG Naba Jagaran Sunderbans ► YAG Jubo
Jagaran Chatra ► YAG Pather Disha Birbhum ► YAG
Nutan Bhor Midnapore ► YAGs Nabadiganto, Naba
Sanjibani Bankura ► YAG Nabodoy



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