HORIZON NEWSLETTER

YWCA OF INDIA - 1896

January – June 2026

WeMpower: Leaving No One Behind



The illustrations featured in this edition are inspired by the traditional Warli art of the Warli Adivasi community of Maharashtra, India, whose visual storytelling celebrates community, equality, and harmony with nature.

YWCA of India
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Inspired by the traditional Warli art of the Warli Adivasi community of Maharashtra, India.

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MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Dear Members, Friends, and Partners in the YWCA Movement,

Greetings in the name of our Lord.

As we journey together through this Quadrennium, I feel that the strength of the YWCA has never been measured by the number of our institutions, but our strength is in our programmes and our commitment to people, to every woman, young & old, and every community.

Our Quadrennium Theme, "WeMpower: Leaving Behind No One," is both a vision and a commitment. It calls us to create a movement where every woman is seen, every voice is heard, and every person has the opportunity to live with dignity, equality, and hope, without exclusion because of poverty, caste, disability, ethnicity, religion, age, or any other circumstance.

This commitment comes alive through the sub-themes that guide our work. It is about strengthening community resilience, responding compassionately during crises, caring for our common home through environmental stewardship, and building safe, inclusive, and accountable institutions. It is also about nurturing young women's leadership, promoting gender justice, protecting sexual and reproductive health and rights, advancing economic and social empowerment. These priorities reflect our belief that lasting transformation happens when women become leaders and changemakers in their own communities.

Across our Local Associations, I have witnessed this vision turning to reality. Through leadership training, community development initiatives, livelihood programmes, advocacy for women's rights, disaster response, or creating safe spaces for women and girls, our members continue to demonstrate what it means to live out our mission. Every small initiative contributes to the movement.

At the heart of the YWCA is our Christian calling to love, serve, and seek justice. Bible verses Micah 6:8: "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."

I exhort every YWCA member to embrace this Quadrennium theme as a way of life. Let us listen deeply, collaborate, mentor our young women, advocate boldly, serve compassionately and build bridges across generations and communities.

I extend my sincere gratitude to our National Board, Local Associations, General Secretaries, staff, volunteers, partners, whose passion keep our movement alive. May God continue to guide our work and strengthen us as we faithfully live out our calling “Together, let us WeMpower, Leaving No One Behind”

With warm regards,

Ms. Kunjamma Mathew

National President
YWCA of India





WeMpower : Leaving No One Behind

A Quadrennium Told in Warli Art

As YWCA of India enters the final year of the 2022–2026 Quadrennium, this edition of the newsletter is more than just a reflection on the past six months. It is a celebration of a journey shaped, a quiet echo of the empowerment we've spent four years trying to build.

Over the past four years, this theme has been more than a guiding phrase. It has found expression in communities where women have rebuilt livelihoods after conflict, in children discovering the joy of learning, in young people finding their voice as leaders, in older persons receiving care and dignity, and in communities coming together to prepare for a more resilient future. Each programme, partnership, and conversation has been rooted in the belief that lasting change begins when every person is seen, valued, and given the opportunity to thrive.

To tell these stories we chose to turn to the timeless language of Warli art, the traditional art from the Warli Adivasi community of Maharashtra, India. It draws every human figure the same way, two simple triangles, equal in shape and space, with no one taller, brighter, or more central than another. Its most loved image of the Tarpa dance, shows men and women hand in hand, moving together in an unbroken circle. No one leads, no one trails. The circle holds only because everyone stays in it. It beautifully reflects the values like inclusion, solidarity, resilience, and hope, values that have defined this Quadrennium.

This is the very essence of Leaving No One Behind. It is not a movement led by a few, but one built in circles, where every voice is heard, every hand is held, and every person has a place. It feels especially meaningful because Warli art, too, has been nurtured across generations by women, passed from mother to daughter as a living tradition. In many ways, it mirrors the journey of this Quadrennium, one of women empowering women, communities uplifting one another, and a legacy that continues to grow with every life it touches.

As we prepare to embrace a new Quadrennium and a new vision, these pages stand as a tribute to the lives touched, the communities strengthened, and the countless acts of compassion and collective action that have shaped this journey.

NATIONAL IMPACT AT A GLANCE

January 2026- June 2026

15,000+
Beneficiaries Impacted

8500+
Women Engaged

200+
Programmes Conducted

Spark Fund

13,000+
Beneficiaries Impacted

7,000+
Women Engaged

150+
Programmes Conducted

2 lakh +
Funds Mobilised

Community Development Projects

1,400+
Beneficiaries Impacted

500+
Women Engaged

40+
Programmes Conducted

06
Regions Covered

RiseUp! Phase IV 2026

800+
Young Women Engaged

14
Master Trainers (Deaf + Hearing)

11
Communities Impacted

10+
Training Sessions Conducted

Young Women as Gender Responsive Climate Advocates

350+
Young Women Engaged

06
Regions Covered

13
Climate Projects

Feminist Consultation Methodology

60
Deaf Adolescents Engaged

02
Deaf Researchers

02
Regions Impacted



For generations, Warli art has celebrated community over individuality. People standing together, working together, dancing together, each figure equal and connected to the next. The people exist within circles of shared purpose and collective strength. This very spirit mirrors the stories that follow. Every project, every event, and every partnership featured in these pages is rooted in the belief that lasting change is never created alone. It grows when communities come together to empower women, strengthen livelihoods, expand opportunities, build resilience, and uphold dignity for all.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Programmes, Partnerships & Moments That Mattered

Behind every initiative is a story of people coming together to create change. Over the past six months, YWCA of India has continued to respond to the evolving needs of communities through programmes that empower women, strengthen livelihoods, expand educational opportunities, build resilience, and advocate for justice.

Alongside these initiatives, key events and campaigns brought together members, partners, and communities in a shared commitment to leaving no one behind. This section shines a light on the stories, milestones, and moments that have shaped our journey.

Every project, every event, and every partnership featured here is united by the purpose to create opportunities, restore dignity, and strengthen communities

FROM RELIEF TO RESILIENCE

Inauguration of Temporary Multi-Purpose Shelter in Wayanad



On 1 July 2026, YWCA of India, in collaboration with Shreyas, Wayanad, inaugurated a Multipurpose Community Shelter in Wayanad, Kerala, marking an important step towards strengthening disaster preparedness and community resilience

Established in one of Kerala's most disaster-prone regions, the shelter reflects a shift from responding to disasters to preparing for them, providing a safe, ready-to-use space for relief and rehabilitation during emergencies.

When the landslides struck Wayanad in July 2024, they changed countless lives in a matter of hours. Villages were cut off as roads disappeared and bridges collapsed, making it difficult for rescue teams to reach those who needed help the most.

As communities struggled to recover, it became impossible to ignore that there was no permanent, safe community space that could be opened immediately to shelter people, coordinate relief, or support recovery efforts.

Recognising the urgent need to strengthen disaster preparedness and community resilience, the idea of this Multipurpose Community Shelter took shape. More than just a building, it is a promise that when the next emergency comes, communities will not have to start from scratch.

The shelter was formally inaugurated with a traditional lamp-lighting ceremony and graced by Ms. Kunjamma Mathew, National President, YWCA of India; Dr. Annie Thomas, National Vice President (South West Region), YWCA of India; Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Thomas, Bishop of Bathery; and Shri Varghese Kurian, Deputy Collector, Wayanad along with the presence of the National Treasurer, National General Secretary, National Board Members and YWCA Leaders of South West Region of YWCA of India.



MENSTRUAL AND CLIMATE JUSTICE WITHIN SRHR

The Missing Priority? And/Or The Missing Intersection?



Recognising that menstrual health is often overlooked in conversations around health, climate resilience, and humanitarian response, YWCA of India collaborated with BAALA as a knowledge partner for the learning session at The Missing Indicator: Menstrual Health in SRHR Frameworks, held at the India International Centre, New Delhi.

Representing YWCA of India, Ms. Pranita Biswasi, National Advocacy and Programmes Manager, along with Ms. Angela Eldon, RiseUp! Master Trainer, facilitated an engaging session that examined why menstrual justice must be recognised as an essential component of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). The discussion highlighted how climate change, disasters, and migration disproportionately affect women's and girls' access to menstrual health services, information, and safe, dignified menstrual practices.

The session also encouraged dialogue on breaking stigma, addressing caste-based barriers, and ensuring that menstrual justice is meaningfully integrated into policies and programmes. By bringing these conversations to the forefront, YWCA of India reaffirmed its commitment to advancing menstrual justice as a matter of equity, dignity, and human rights.



Because resilient communities require gender-responsive solutions that leave no one behind.

YWCA OF INDIA AT GLOBAL FORUMS

YWCA Asia Regional Meeting, *Taiwan*



In May, the Asia Regional Meeting, hosted by the YWCA of Taiwan, brought together leaders from Bangladesh, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand, alongside participants from Aotearoa New Zealand, Switzerland, Chile and the United States.

Ms. Kunjamma Mathew, Ms. Dhiya Ann Mathew, and Ms. Amanda Fernandes, represented YWCA of India at the 2026 YWCA Asia Regional Meeting in Taipei, Taiwan.

The regional meeting brought together YWCA leaders and youth representatives to strengthen intergenerational leadership, exchange experiences, and collectively shape the future of the YWCA movement.





YWCA OF INDIA AT GLOBAL FORUMS

Women Deliver Conference, *Melbourne*



Women Deliver is a space where thousands of women leaders, young women, girls from grassroots to movements to policymakers from across the globe all in one shared commitment in standing together for advancing gender justice.

National General Secretary Ms. Dhiya Ann Mathew and National Advocacy and Programmes Manager Ms. Pranita Biswasi represented the YWCA of India at the Women Deliver Conference in Melbourne, Australia as part of the World YWCA delegation where they facilitated a session on Feminist Consultations for Disability Justice drawing learnings from the Feminist Consultative Methodology Research on Comprehensive Sexual Education and SRHR Awareness conducted in two phases by YWCA of India.





A SEAT AT THE TABLE

YWCA of India Joins NCWR's Call for Women's Reservation



For decades, women across India have advocated for equal representation in the country's legislatures. While the passage of the Women's Reservation Act marked a historic milestone in 2023, its implementation remains linked to future processes of census and delimitation, leaving many women questioning how much longer they must wait.

With this shared concern, YWCA of India, joined hands with women's organisations, activists, and civil society leaders to form the National Coalition for Women's Reservation (NCWR). On 10 July 2026, a press conference in New Delhi was organized, calling for the immediate and unconditional implementation of 33% reservation for women in Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies by delinking it to Census and Delimitation.

Representing YWCA of India, Ms. Kunjamma Mathew, the National President, and Ms. Dhiya Ann Mathew, the National General Secretary, addressed the gathering, reaffirming the organisation's longstanding commitment to gender justice and women's leadership. She emphasised that meaningful democracy can only be achieved when women are equally represented in the spaces where decisions are made.

For YWCA, with its longstanding legacy of advancing women's rights, ensuring that women have an equal voice in shaping public policy and the future of the nation remains central to its mission.

The press conference marked the beginning of a wider nationwide advocacy effort, bringing together organisations with one common message, women's representation cannot be delayed any longer. By standing alongside the National Coalition for Women's Reservation, YWCA of India continues to champion a future where every woman has not only the opportunity to participate in democracy but also the chance to lead it.



DEMANDING OUR RIGHT

As a part of the National Coalition for Women's Reservation, YWCA of India participated in the protest held at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi, calling for the immediate and unconditional implementation of the Women's Reservation Act, standing in solidarity with women's rights organisations and civil society groups.





Nukkad Natak (Street Play)

Young girls from YWCA of India's Trilokpuri Community Development Project, called the Pipal Chhaya Centre, participated in the protest through a thought-provoking nukkad natak (street play), bringing the movement to life. They traced the journey of women's political representation in India, urging all to reflect on the gap between constitutional promises and performative inclusion.





FCRA BILL AMENDMENT CAMPAIGN

Supporting the organisations that strengthen communities every day.

For more than a century, YWCA of India has worked alongside communities, creating safe spaces, expanding opportunities for women, and serving those who need support the most. When the proposed amendments to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) raised concerns about the future of civil society organisations and their ability to continue this work, YWCA joined a collective call for dialogue and thoughtful reconsideration.

Through public engagement, and the submission of memorandums by Local Associations across the country, YWCA reaffirmed its commitment to protecting an enabling environment for civil society, the very spaces where communities learn, heal, organise, and grow. When organisations are able to serve freely, they become part of the fabric that helps communities remain resilient, especially in times of need.

YWCA Muvattupuzha



Hon'ble Member of Parliament
Shri Adv. Dean Kuriakose

YWCA Kothamangalam



Hon'ble Member of Parliament
Shri Adv. Dean Kuriakose

YWCA Chungathara



Hon'ble Member of Parliament
Shri Aryadan Shoukath

YWCA Palakkad



Hon'ble Member of Parliament
Shri V.K. Sreekandan

YWCA Vakathanam GIF



Hon'ble Member of Parliament
Shri Adv. K. Francis George

YWCA Kottayam



Hon'ble Member of Parliament
Shri Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan

YWCA Mundakayam



Hon'ble Member of Parliament
Shri Adv. Sebastian M. J.

YWCA Changanacherry



Hon'ble Member of Parliament
Shri Vinu Job

YWCA Kalathipady



Hon'ble Member of Parliament
Shri Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan

YWCA Anchal GIF



Hon'ble Member of Parliament
Shri N. K. Premachandran

DALIT HISTORY MONTH SYMPOSIUM

Joint collaboration between the National YWCA of India and NCCI–Commission on Dalit Concerns



The YWCA of India National Office, in collaboration with the NCCI–Commission on Dalit Concerns, organised a symposium to celebrate a day of reflection, dialogue, and collective learning around caste, dignity, equality, and justice. The symposium covered history, culture, lived realities, and possibilities for change, creating space for participants to listen to experiences that are often overlooked and to recognise the contributions and resilience of Dalit communities.

It comprised two panel discussions. The first panel, "Celebrations and Culture: History, Traditions and Heritage," explored the ways in which identity and heritage continue to be carried forward. The panel was moderated by Ms. Manisha, National Programme Coordinator at AIDMAM, with insights shared by Ms. Daniya Tabassum of Project Mukti and Mr. Rajat Kumar Sonkar from the Department of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics.

The conversation then moved from culture to rights and lived realities. The second panel, "Realities and Rights: What Can Be Done Further," was moderated by Ms. K. Kalai Arasi, Human Rights Professional. Insights were shared by Rev. John Wesley, Bishop Commissary, Evangelical Church of India; Ms. Mohsina Akhter, National Coordinator, Dalit Adivasi Shakti Adhikar Manch; journalist Mr. Hitesh Gajbhiye, MSW, University of Delhi; Ms. Stanshila, Research & Documentation Coordinator, All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch – NCDHR; and Ms. Anju, Founder-Member and Secretary of the Global Campaign for Dalit Women.

Together, the sessions moved the discussion beyond awareness towards responsibility and action. The gathering concluded with a renewed commitment to solidarity, equality, and justice, while strengthening connections among those working towards a society where every person can live with dignity and be valued without discrimination.



CELEBRATING 130 YEARS OF YWCA OF INDIA



As part of the celebrations marking 130 years of YWCA of India, members from across the YWCA movement in India participated sharing inspiring stories, reflections, and creative expressions through a nationwide creative write-up and video competition. We are delighted to recognise and celebrate the winners whose entries beautifully captured the spirit, legacy, and enduring impact of YWCA.



YWCA CUTTACK

30 Second Video Category



Ms. FLAVIE (YWCA of Bombay)

Write-up Category

Special Mention from President's Desk

A special mention from the president's desk was extended to the deeply moving and unforgettable video submission by Ms. Susan Koshy of YWCA Mavelikkara, that touched her heart in a profoundly personal way. It beautifully reflected the compassion, hope, and spirit of service that lie at the heart of the YWCA movement.

MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

When we sit as a Programme department and reflect on the work, one truth stays with me;
Our Programmes are all about ***"Meeting People Where They Are".***

At YWCA of India, our programmes are woven through the lived realities of each generation, each community and each partnership we are blessed to walk with.It is lived in the YWCA centres, classrooms, in community halls, shelter homes, hostels,on street corners, conferences and carried with passion.

As we made a conscious choice of Inclusion in this quadrennium, we moved forward with it as revising the way we design our programmes. That means a child in our preschools learning her first alphabet also learns that her voice matters.It means a young woman at the YWCA centre and trainings is not just taught leadership but she is given the microphone to practice it, to question and to claim space in public conversations. It means our senior YWCA leaders and members, with decades of experience in the movement are not sidelined as "advisors" but their stories, their struggles and their wisdom continue to be the spine of what we do today.And it also means the staff bridging between the vision and impact every single day carrying the passion of YWCA into every programme, training,every report, every late-night planning call. Through our programmes we try to ensure that the strategy does not just remain on paper but also provide direction for implementation at all levels.

Our Programmes for the young women, women, underrepresented, the marginalized and the persons with disabilities is all about creating a space for all to tell us what they need, what barriers they face, and how they want to grow. In our vocational trainings, in our leadership forums, in our community dialogues, we asked: "What would make this work for you?" And then we listened.

Across our local associations, we supported programmes that reflected the quadrennium theme while responding to the unique needs of the communities.

At the Local level, this meant vocational trainings, capacity building and learning together. Nationally, it translated into coming together to amplify one voice on women's rights, inclusion, and policy accountability. And, globally, it meant sharing what taught us and what a group of young women and women can achieve while gaining knowledge from Cross-cultural learnings

People often ask me, "What is your Programme Strategy?". Often, I find myself answering that I follow a Programme Strategy with a Human Face which means the lived realities and interventions to meet the needs.

I met a young woman who said, "Didi, earlier I was scared to speak. Now I want to share my story more often". I met a YWCA member who said, "After 30 years, I still feel needed here and the movement has so much to give." I met a staff member who said, "This work is hard, but it is mine and this is what I love to do."I take this as the impact of the Programmes.

With the collective contribution of each one involved, I have witnessed that this movement has always been carried by ordinary people doing extraordinary things, together.

As we move into the next half of the year, we will continue to listen and co-create.

Thank you for trusting us with your story and letting our programmes be part of your life.



Ms. Pranita Biswasi

National Advocacy &
Programmes Manager
YWCA of India

One of the most celebrated artworks in Warli art is the Tarpa Dance, depicting dancers moving in unison around the musician. Here, no single person takes the centre stage, instead, the circle itself becomes a symbol of equality, shared responsibility, and collective strength. It is a powerful reminder that progress is not made by individuals alone, but by communities moving forward together. As we celebrate International Women's Day, the Tarpa Dance beautifully reflects the journey of women all across India, advancing not in isolation, but through solidarity, mutual support, and the unwavering belief that when every woman has a place in the circle, society as a whole moves forward.



CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S WEEK

Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls

Every year, International Women's Day reminds us that the journey towards equality is far from over. This year, YWCA Local Associations across India embraced that reminder with open hearts and renewed purpose as they came together to observe International Women's Week 2026 under the theme: "Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls."

It was a week that celebrated not only the achievements of women, but also the collective responsibility we share in creating a world where every woman and girl can live with dignity, freedom, and opportunity

The Local Associations marked International Women's Week in diverse ways across the country, with each celebration becaming a testament to the movement's legacy of empowering women and transforming communities.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S WEEK

When women come together in faith, knowledge, leadership, and solidarity, rights are upheld, justice is advanced, and meaningful action becomes possible.

YWCA Ernakulum



YWCA Delhi



YWCA Muvattupuzha



YWCA Adoor



YWCA Kottayam



YWCA Thiruvalla



YWCA Kayamkulam



YWCA Chengannur



YWCA Kozhencherry



YWCA Calicut



YWCA Tuticorin



YWCA Secunderabad



YWCA Ayroor



YWCA Lunglei



YWCA Pathanamthitta



YWCA Alleppey



YWCA Marthandam



YWCA Thiruvalla



YWCA Shimla



YWCA Angamaly



YWCA Quilon



YWCA Goa



YWCA Chathannoor



YWCA Mokokchung



YWCA Kunnamkulam



YWCA Nagpur



YWCA Shillong



YWCA Alangad



YWCA Guwahati





A timeless symbol in Warli tradition is the Tree of Life symbolizing life, fertility, nourishment, and the inseparable bond between humans and nature. It is more than a part of the landscape, it is the source from which life, community, and sustenance flow. The Tarpa dance, traditionally performed after harvests and during festivals, celebrates community, gratitude, and the rhythm of nature. The circular formation also reflects the cyclical nature of life with the changing seasons, sowing and harvesting, birth and renewal. As we observe World Environment Day 2026 this artwork reminds us that the future we hope to build begins with living in balance with the Earth, caring for its resources, and recognising that protecting nature is ultimately an act of protecting one another.



CELEBRATING WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Inspired by Nature. For Climate. For Our Future

YWCA Local Associations across the country embraced World Environment Day 2026 as a call to move from awareness to action guided by the theme:
"**Inspired by Nature. For Climate. For Our Future"**

Members reimagined their relationship with the environment as active custodians of creation, engaging with their communities through three simple yet meaningful pathways; learning together through hands-on workshops, making change visible through community-led environmental action, and inspiring others through creative awareness initiatives

Whether by nurturing a plant, cleaning shared spaces, or encouraging conversations on climate justice, every activity reflected that change begins with small acts of care, multiplied by many hands working together.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Through these initiatives, YWCA of India continues to encourage communities to adopt sustainable practices that protect both the environment and the well-being of future generations.

YWCA Kottayam



YWCA Mokokchung



YWCA Shillong



YWCA Kothamangalam



YWCA Nagpur



YWCA Calicut



YWCA Chengannur



YWCA Punalur



YWCA Tuticorin



YWCA Kozhencherry



YWCA Alangad



YWCA Aizawl



YWCA Simla



YWCA Pallom



YWCA of Kottayam



YWCA Pathanamthitta



YWCA Changanacherry



YWCA Angamaly



YWCA Chathannoor



YWCA Palayamkottai



YWCA Ayroor



YWCA Balasore



YWCA Alleppey



YWCA Lunglei



YWCA Kunnamkulam



YWCA Secunderabad



YWCA Delhi



YWCA Fort Cochin



These initiatives reinforced the importance of making environmental stewardship a shared responsibility woven into everyday life.

The observance echoed the values of our quadrennium theme ‘WeMpower: Leaving No One Behind’, reminding us that caring for the environment is ultimately about caring for people. Healthy ecosystems, clean surroundings, and sustainable practices create stronger communities where everyone can thrive.

Warli art has long celebrated the power of community, portraying life not through individuals, but through people coming together for a shared purpose. This artwork captures that spirit beautifully. Layer upon layer of figures work, celebrate, create, and support one another, forming a living tapestry of collective effort. At its centre lies an entire community, each person contributing to something greater than themselves. The rising human formation reaching towards the sun speaks of hope, aspiration, and the belief that lasting change is built through many hands working together. It is a fitting reflection of YWCA of India's national programmes, where dedicated teams, committed partners, and communities come together to transform vision into action.



NATIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS:

Real change takes shape by understanding what communities need, fostering partnerships that bring people together, and staying committed to listening, learning, and acting.

At the heart of YWCA of India's national programmes are people and possibilities. A child finding a supportive space to learn, a woman gaining skills and greater confidence to build her livelihood, a young woman finding building the courage to lead, or a YWCA local association turning a local need into meaningful action. These moments may begin small, but together they become part of a much larger movement for change.

As we look at the three locations under spotlight, the stories that follow are therefore more than reports of what was done. They are glimpses of what becomes possible when communities are listened to, people are empowered, and change is built together.



Community Development Projects (CDPs)

Every community has its own story, its own challenges, and its own strengths. Through its Community Development Projects, YWCA of India walks alongside communities, listening before acting and responding with programmes that reflect local needs and aspirations. From healthcare and education to livelihood opportunities and leadership development, these initiatives are designed not just to meet immediate needs, but to help people build lives of dignity, confidence, and hope. At their heart, CDPs are about creating opportunities that continue to transform lives long after the programme has ended.



The focus lies on Health and Wellness, Education and Skill Training, and Livelihood & Economic Empowerment.

Help communities move towards a future built on resilience, dignity, and self-reliance.

People, Practice, and Purpose

At the heart of every programme, every class, and every skill we teach lies the community. CDP is not about projects on paper, it is about people, their aspirations, and the relationships we build along the way. Every initiative is rooted in listening, learning, and walking alongside communities as they create lasting change for themselves.

Ms. Judith Johnson

National Programme Associate
YWCA of India





CDP:
Dehradun Community Development Project

The Dehradun Project places the well-being and dignity of older persons at its heart, creating a supportive space where senior citizens can access regular healthcare and the care they need to lead healthier, more secure lives. Through a dedicated health clinic and regular medical camps, the project responds to their ongoing health needs, helping build a more supportive community for older persons. Beyond elderly care, the project also focuses on creating opportunities for young women through vocational training that builds practical skills for employment and entrepreneurship.

Communities are at their strongest when every generation is given the opportunity to thrive.

Key Focus Areas



Elderly Care & Health Services

A dedicated health clinic is run, with monthly health camps at the centre to provide basic health check-ups, monitoring, and medical guidance for senior citizens ensuring regular access to healthcare for the elderly.



Vocational Training for Young Women

Vocational training for young women focuses on practical skills that can help them become employable and financially independent, creating opportunities for women in the community to build livelihoods and contribute to household income.

DEHRADUN

Highlights



Monthly Health Camps and Medical Check Ups

Free bi-weekly health camps were organized in partnership with HelpAge India, ensuring that senior citizens and community members had access to regular healthcare close to home. The camps also offered counselling, physiotherapy guidance, and home visits for elderly beneficiaries unable to travel

Community Engagement & Skill Building for Youth

A three-day Summer Camp was organized for children, creating a safe and engaging space where they could learn, explore, and grow. Through sessions on personal safety, self-esteem, health and hygiene, education, social awareness, art, music, dance, and creative expression, the camp nurtured creativity and life skills.





Elder Abuse Awareness Day

In collaboration with HelpAge India, an awareness session was organized on the rights, dignity, and well-being of older persons. The team participated in a state-level programme that brought together government agencies, civil society organisations, and community leaders, reaffirming the collective responsibility to create a safer, more respectful, and inclusive society for senior citizens.

Medical Health Camp: Badrinath Colony

In collaboration with Cure Hospital, a Free Community Medical Health Camp was organised for residents of Badrinath Colony and neighbouring communities, bringing health screenings, specialist consultations, free medicines, and preventive healthcare closer to those who needed it most, with special support for elderly beneficiaries.



Dehradun Community Development Project



CDP:
Tanda Forest Range School Project

Recognising the challenges children face in accessing quality education within the forest communities of Uttarakhand, YWCA of India initiated the Tanda Forest Range School Project to expand access to education and opportunities within the community. Through the Tanda Community School, children are supported through remedial and value-based learning in a safe and nurturing environment, bringing learning closer to the children who need it the most. By investing in their education and well-being, the project seeks to give children the foundation they need to pursue their aspirations and build a brighter future for themselves and their communities.

Purpose Led

Key Focus Areas



Quality Education & Holistic Learning

The project strengthens children's learning through remedial education, academic support, and engaging teaching resources that build strong foundational skills. By making learning interactive and accessible, it helps children gain the confidence they need to continue their educational journey.



Safe & Nurturing Learning Environment

Recognising that children learn best when they feel cared for, the project provides daily nutritious mid-day meals while continually improving classrooms to create safe, welcoming, and child-friendly spaces. Together, these efforts promote better attendance, healthier development, & thriving environment.

TANDA

Highlights



Remedial Learning and Academic Support

The Tanda Community School organizes advanced remedial classes to strengthen children's learning, focusing on foundational literacy and numeracy. The support provided was personalised, children were encouraged to bridge learning gaps, build confidence in the classroom.

Learning Resources and Teaching Aids

To support a joyful and enriching learning experience, the school was equipped with books, notebooks, art materials, stationery, and teaching resources for both students and tutors. Classroom essentials such as desks, chairs, whiteboards, fans, and a water dispenser further transformed the centre into a comfortable and child-friendly space.





Nutrition Support: Mid-day Meals

A daily mid-day meal programme was introduced to ensure that every child attending the Tanda Community School received a nutritious meal alongside their education. By addressing children's nutritional needs, the initiative encourages regular attendance, better concentration, and a healthier learning environment.

Safe and Child-Friendly Learning Spaces

To create a more enriching learning environment, the school upgraded its classroom infrastructure with improved seating, lighting, and ventilation. Child-friendly learning corners were also established, transforming the classrooms into spaces where children feel safe, inspired, and eager to learn.





CDP:
Manipur Project: Building Resilient Lives

The Resilient Lives Initiative was undertaken by YWCA of India to help the families rebuild their lives after the humanitarian crisis in Manipur. Working alongside displaced communities in Churachandpur, the initiative focuses on createing opportunities for women to regain financial independence while helping young people rediscover hope through education, career guidance, and psychosocial support. More than restoring livelihoods, the project is about restoring confidence, dignity, and the belief that even after loss, a new beginning is possible.

Recovery begins with dignity, grows through opportunity, and flourishes when communities rebuild together

Purpose Led

Key Focus Areas



Livelihood Restoration

The initiative helps displaced women rebuild their livelihoods by creating sustainable income opportunities. It does so by nurturing local skills and entrepreneurship, helping women regain financial independence, strengthen household resilience, and move beyond dependence on humanitarian assistance.



Education & Psycho-Social Support

For young people whose education and aspirations have been disrupted by conflict, the project provides competitive examination coaching, career guidance, and psychosocial support in a safe and encouraging environment by combining learning with emotional well-being, empowering them to build a safe future.

MANIPUR

Highlights



Community Engagement & Project Mobilisation

The project began by engaging with village leaders, women's groups, and displaced communities to introduce the initiative and identify beneficiaries. These consultations helped ensure that the programme responded to the community's needs while building trust and participation from the outset.

Livelihood Restoration

Mushroom cultivation units were set up in two resettlement villages and weaving artisans beneficiaries received their first set of tools, groundwork for the garment value-addition and retail unit began, and outreach continued to enrol women in the moodah making enterprise, creating new pathways towards financial independence.





Education & Career Support

A competitive examination coaching centre was launched to support displaced youth preparing for SSC, Banking, and State Government examinations. With dedicated faculty, mentoring, and career guidance, the programme is helping young people strengthen their aspirations and prepare for meaningful employment opportunities.

Building the Foundational Infrastructure

The project established the essential infrastructure needed for long-term implementation. From recruiting programme staff and preparing learning spaces to engaging trainers and resource persons, these efforts laid a strong foundation for delivering sustained support to conflict-affected women and youth.



Manipur Project: Building Resilient Lives



Spark Fund Project: Enabling Local Associations

Strengthening YWCA Local Associations' capacity from the ground up.

Spark Fund was initiated in an effort to build capacity for the local associations to enable and financially support them to design, implement and scale impactful social work, particularly CSR and donor-funded projects, in line with the World Strategic Roadmap towards Goal 2035.

The fund is backed by YWCA of India that provides financial support to the local associations by adopting a phased approach spanning over five years, gradually empowering associations to grow into self-sustaining, financially independent Engines of Change

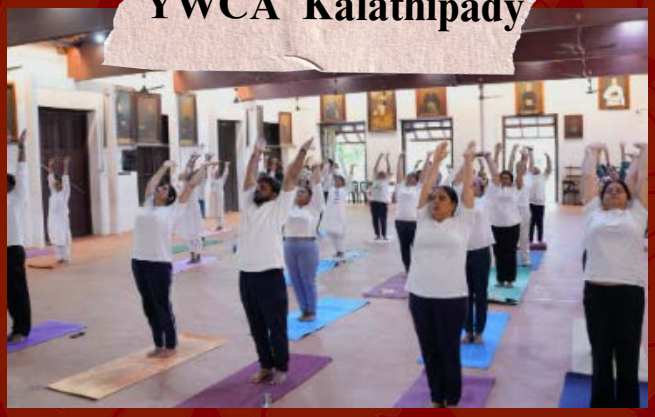
The focus of the fund lies on increasing youth engagement through dynamic and meaningful social initiatives. It also promotes the development of sustainable, community-driven projects.

YWCA of India provides local associations with financial support, empowering and enabling them.

HIGHLIGHTS

Stories of Impact and Transformation

YWCA Kalathipady



Successfully organised Yoga Mahotsav Programme in partnership with the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY), Ministry of AYUSH, mobilization of ₹2 lakh in funding

YWCA Lunglei



A Programme was organised on The International Day of Education, emphasizing on the importance of education for girls, gender equality and equal opportunity, encouraging girls to become advocates of the same.

YWCA Pathanamthitta



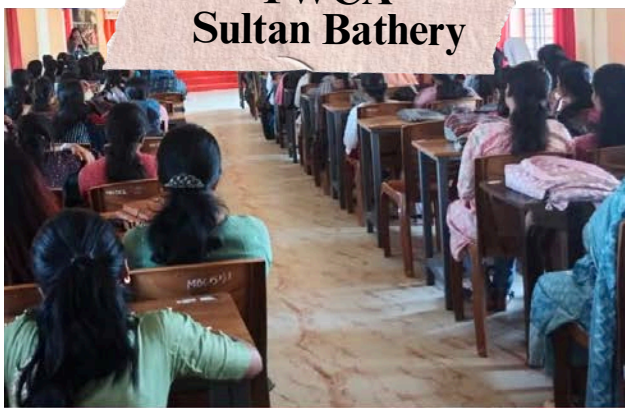
Organised for Dalit Women and Children in Manjathode Forest Area, aimed at increasing awareness about social inclusion and compassion for marginalized communities.

YWCA Changanassery



Mental Health & Well Being Programme was organised at Assumption College to promote mental health awareness and emotional well being among students.

YWCA Sultan Bathery



A Programme on Menstrual Hygiene Awareness was conducted for the members of Tejus and Haritha residence association, with sessions regarding designed on the use of menstrual cup, & the various problems faced during menstruation and menopause.

YWCA Muvattupuzha



Adolescent Health Awareness Programme was organised on SRHR education, puberty awareness, and free health and dental screenings, empowering adolescents with accurate health information and promoting preventive healthcare.

YWCA Kundara



The Drug Free Future programme aimed to educate college students about the dangers of drug abuse and promote informed decision-making, and a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

YWCA Hyderabad



Children's Rights and Social Responsibilit awareness programme was designed to help students understand their rights, responsibilities, and safety measures.

YWCA Kayamkulam



Organized awareness campaigns promoting tobacco-free lifestyles, and encouraging environmental responsibility through plastic waste collection and home gardening initiatives.

YWCA Thumpamon



Promoted menstrual health and sustainable menstrual practices through awareness sessions and the launch of a Menstrual Cup Distribution Project in collaboration with the Municipality.

YWCA Tuticorin



Organized Community Outreach for Dalit Children promoting education, confidence, hygiene, and inclusion among children from marginalized communities through interactive learning, games, and emotional support, strengthening community trust and hope.

YWCA Thodupuzha

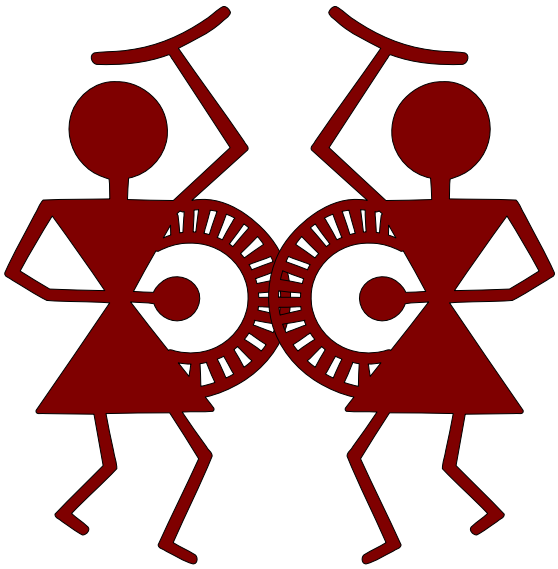


The Reproductive Health & Menstrual Hygiene Awareness initiative equipped young people with accurate knowledge on reproductive health and menstrual hygiene, encouraging open dialogue, challenging stigma, and enabling informed health decisions.

YWCA Balasore



Organized awareness sesssion for marginalized communities in Andivira village on constitutional rights, equality, and social justice, empowering participants with the knowledge to claim their rights.



Spark Fund Photo Wall



















RiseUp!
Young Women's Transformative Leadership - Phase IV

The RiseUp! Young Women's Leadership Programme was developed to advance the leadership of young women at the individual, community and policy levels. Built on a simple yet powerful idea of young women teaching young women, the programme adopts a Training of the Trainer (TOT) model to deliver training on core human rights issues young women in our communities face, including violence against women, sexual and reproductive health rights, and gender equality

It is currently in its fourth phase, carrying forward a decades of grassroots trust and an expanding network of young trainers, while continuing to deepen its methodology and reach.

A programme for young women, led by young women.

HIGHLIGHTS

Stories of Impact and Transformation



The RiseUp! team facilitated a session on Young Women Changemakers for Civic Participation during the Public Leadership Workshop. A RiseUp! alumna shared her leadership journey, highlighting her advocacy with local elected representatives for more inclusive policies, particularly for young women with disabilities.



A two-day online Training of Trainers (ToT) brought together 10 RiseUp! Master Trainers to welcome new trainers and strengthen the skills of existing ones. Through sessions on facilitation, programme priorities, and alumni engagement, participants shared experiences, celebrated achievements, and learned from one another.

RiseUp! Community Advocacy Workshop

The RiseUp! Community Advocacy Workshop was conducted under the theme "Advancing Equitable Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Through Community Advocacy and Engagement."







Adopting a participatory and experiential learning approach, the workshop covered key topics including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), menstrual justice, community and stakeholder mapping, problem tree analysis, action planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL), and community advocacy planning. Participants also developed one-year community advocacy action plans tailored to the needs of their respective communities, providing a practical roadmap for local implementation.



Visit to Trilokpuri

Master Trainers took part in a roundtable simulation at Trilokpuri, where they stepped into the role of facilitators and put their learning into practice. By leading mock sessions, navigating discussions, and responding to questions in a supportive environment, they gained the confidence and practical experience needed to replicate the training and lead community advocacy initiatives within their own communities.





ANISHA-
NORTH EAST



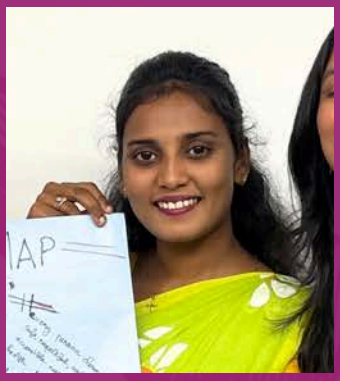
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NIKKITA-
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PRATEEEKSHA -
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BLESSY-
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DIANA-
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ANGELA-
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ANANYA-
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ANBUSINDHU-
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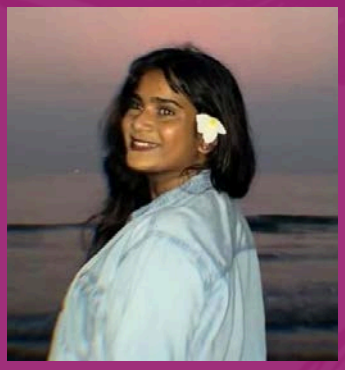
MISHA -
SOUTH WEST



PHOOLMATI -
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SHEETAL -
EAST



MYRA-
WEST



APPLESTA-
WEST

Meet the

RISEUP! MASTER TRAINERS

NATIONAL IMPACT AT A GLANCE

Since the inception of RiseUp!

3300+
Young Women Engaged

25
Communities Impacted

40+
Locations Reached

59+
Ywca Local Associations involved









EDITORIAL: VOICES OF HOPE

It's the little things citizens do. That's what will make the difference.
— Wangari Maathai

For this newsletter, the Editorial section looks beyond the numbers, programmes, and milestones to the people and experiences that give the work its meaning, the questions that stayed with us, the lessons we carried forward, and the moments that changed how we see the world.

Voices of Hope is a collection of reflections and creative expressions that invite readers into these more personal spaces. A dream shaped by adversity, a memory rooted in nature, a poem born from another woman's struggle, each offering a different way of seeing, feeling, and understanding the world around us.

As the YWCA of India enters the final year of the quadrennium theme, 'WeMpower: Leaving No One Behind' these pieces remind us that a movement is shaped not only by what it accomplishes, but by the voices it makes space for, the stories it carries, and the possibilities it inspires.

BEYOND THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

A Personal Reflection

As part of the Spark Fund Project, I set off on a journey around 1:00 PM to Laha Manjathodu Unnathi along with two of my friends. Enjoying the beauty of the mountain ranges and observing the water levels of the Pamba and Kakkad rivers, we continued our journey.

Manjathodu Unnathi is located along a route of immense historical significance. It leads to the historically renowned Nilakkal Church, established by St. Thomas, a disciple of Jesus Christ. It is also the route to the Moozhiyar Sabarigiri Power House, as well as the path along which the Thiruvabharanam—the sacred ornaments worn by Lord Ayyappa of Sabarimala—is carried on foot from Pandalam.

During the British era, this forest land was cleared for tea plantations, and later, rubber cultivation was introduced. As we travelled, my companions, Mr. Raja Bhas and his wife Siby, shared the history of the region with me. Manjathodu Unnathi is located about 30 kilometres from Pathanamthitta.

Life in Manjathodu

We reached Manjathodu in about an hour. When we arrived, a family from Unnathi was preparing to head into the forest, accompanied even by toddlers. Their journey was to collect honey, frankincense (kunthirikam), wild tubers, and herbal medicines from deep inside the forest. These forest products are later sold to the local community, providing the family's primary source of livelihood.

Life here is closely intertwined with nature. Wild elephants often come right up to their homes at night, while reptiles and crawling insects are a constant presence. Many families live in huts covered only with tarpaulin sheets, though I also saw a few concrete houses constructed by the Government.

They sleep on bare floors, and with no electricity available, evenings are lit only by torches and candles.

Surrounded by trees, they are spared the harsh summer heat. Yet during the rainy season, life becomes incredibly difficult. Looking at these children of the forest, who live in constant fear of wild animals and reptiles yet continue to coexist with them, filled me with wonder. They depend on the nearby river for water, and at night, their dogs stand guard, protecting them.

The Children I Met

The moment we parked our car, the children came running towards us. Perhaps they hoped we had brought something for them. We gave them sweets. The pain of hunger is the greatest pain in the world. Many of the children did not even have decent clothes to wear. Having worked as a teacher, I had never before seen children living in such difficult circumstances. A deep ache settled somewhere in my heart—one that remains fresh and unforgettable to this day.

A Lasting Impression

As I said goodbye and turned back, waves of sorrow filled my mind. Before leaving, I promised the children that I would visit them again. Had I not been appointed as the Programme Officer for the YWCA, I would never have travelled to this place. This journey gave me the opportunity to witness firsthand the lives of people in our own land who live in such challenging conditions, yet continue to find happiness within them. I must help them in whatever way I can.

By Annamma Thomas

Spark Fund P. O.
YWCA Pathanamthitta



THE QUIET ART OF BELONGING

"A moment from our Rural Camp in Choodahalli, South Karnataka, during my first year of Master's. More than a photograph, it is a reminder that belonging is often found in the simplest human connections."

There are afternoons that refuse to end. They remain suspended somewhere between memory and dust, returning without invitation, carrying the warmth of a small hand that once held yours as though it had always belonged there.

This photograph remembers one such afternoon. It remembers a season when time was measured differently, not by clocks, but by footsteps running barefoot across uneven ground; by laughter arriving before names did; by the quiet certainty with which children folded strangers into the ordinary rhythm of their day.

I often wonder what remains after we leave a place. Surely not our footprints. Dust has always known how to reclaim itself. Perhaps what lingers are smaller things: a half-finished conversation beneath a tree, the silence shared between stories, the instinctive way a child leans closer without asking permission. Such moments resist documentation. They survive only by choosing a different home inside us.

The children never spoke the language of lack. Instead, they spoke in interrupted giggles, in stubborn games that refused endings, in eyes that seemed older than their years and yet astonishingly willing to trust another morning.

There was no performance in their joy. It arrived quietly, like light entering through an unlatched window, never demanding attention, only presence. It was there that I first understood that hope rarely announces itself. It sits beside you unnoticed.



It borrows the shape of a smile missing a tooth, of fingers raised in playful victory without ever knowing what battles the world imagines they have fought. It hides inside the ordinary until someone pauses long enough to recognise it.

Perhaps belonging is something equally unremarkable. Not an invitation, nor an achievement, but the brief miracle of no one asking who deserves to stand within the frame.

The photograph gathers everyone without negotiation. Faces overlap. Hands interrupt one another. No one waits to be arranged before becoming part of the picture.

And years later, that is what returns to me, not the image itself, but its quiet grammar. A world where closeness required no explanation. Where affection arrived before introduction. Where hope had already learned every child's name long before any of us thought to give it one.

By Anagha Rajesh

Junior Programme Associate
YWCA of India



THE WAITING ROOM

The National Coalition for Women's Reservation are taking to the streets this Monsoon Session, demanding the immediate implementation of Women's reservation by delinking it to Census and Delimitation. They question they ask it, "why should women wait?

Every morning, she arrived before the doors opened, setting up the chairs in the waiting room for all the others who were yet to come.

She carried no file, no petition, no placard. Only a huge brass key she had inherited from the women before her.

"The door will open soon" they had told her.
So she along with countless others, waited.
The room was large, lined with clocks that all ticked differently. One clock waited for a survey. Another waited for a new map. A third waited for the "right time" that never seemed to arrive.

Every few years, someone entered, adjusted the clocks, dusted the shelves, and assured everyone that the door would open after just one more process. "Almost there," they smiled.

Years passed.

The women in the waiting room grew older. Some taught the younger girls how to wait with dignity. Others embroidered hope into banners that faded in the sunlight. A few left, believing the key no longer fit in the lock.

Outside the room, the world continued to move. Roads were built. Laws were passed. Governments changed. Elections came. New buildings rose where empty fields once stood. Yet the door remained closed.

One day, a little girl accidentally wandered into the waiting room. "Appalled at the sight of such a large gathering, she pondered and asked what are you all waiting for?

The women looked at each other.
One answered, "Justice." Another whispered, "Representation." An older woman smiled sadly. "Permission to unlock the door."

The girl frowned, looking at the woman who carried the huge brass key. "But if the key is already in your hands," she asked, pointing at the key, "why are you waiting for someone else to come and unlock the door?"

Silence filled the room. For the first time, the women stopped looking at the clocks. They looked at the door and noticed something they had never questioned before. The lock had not rusted, and the hinges were strong which meant the key still fit.

They realised, It was not time that had kept the door closed.

It was the decision not to turn the key. And in that moment, they understood the greatest trick the keymakers had played. They did not deny women's rights outright, but postponed them until postponement began to feel ordinary.

The next morning, the waiting room was empty. Not because the door had opened by itself. But because the women had finally stopped mistaking delay for destiny and taken to the streets.

By Khushi Gupta

National Communications Associate
YWCA of India



A SMILE THAT SPEAKS HOPE

Every smile tells a story of courage, confidence, and hope

This photograph captures more than a moment, it captures a journey. The woman in this picture once hesitated to participate in community discussions, believing her voice did not matter.

Through the support of the WeMPower initiative and the encouragement of her peers, she gradually found the confidence to express herself, learn new skills, and take an active role in her community.

Today, she stands not only as a participant but also as an inspiration to other women. Her smile reflects resilience, self-belief, and the power of collective support.

As Programme Officers, we often witness transformations that cannot be measured by numbers alone.

Every confident step, every shared idea, and every renewed dream reminds us that empowerment begins with listening, learning, and believing in one another.

This image reflects the heart of our theme, "Voices of Hope: WeMPower, Leaving No One Behind." When one woman finds her voice, she encourages many others to speak. Together, these voices create stronger families, resilient communities, and a future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

By Sudha R.

SparkFund P. O.
YWCA Tuticorin



AN OPEN LETTER TO THE WOMEN WE WALK BESIDE

Every visit to your community reminds us why this work matters.

We have witnessed your resilience in moments of uncertainty, your generosity even when resources were limited, and your determination to create better futures for your families and communities.

While programmes often measure success through numbers, we know that the real impact lives in the stories behind them—a woman who speaks confidently for the first time, a young mother who starts a business, a community that chooses collaboration over silence, or a girl who begins to believe her dreams are possible.

You continue to teach us that empowerment is not something given; it is something nurtured, protected, and celebrated together.

As we reflect on this year's journey, we thank you for trusting us, challenging us, and inspiring us. The path ahead may still hold obstacles, but we are committed to walking alongside you.

Together, we are building communities where every voice counts, every opportunity is shared, and no one is left behind.

By Sincy Philip

SparkFund P. O.
YWCA Muvattuphuzha



A SHOP FULL OF DREAMS



Meri apni ek dukaan ho!
Na koi badi naukri na bade office ki kursi wala sapna!
Bas meri ek chotti si dukan ho,
Jisme meri izzat ho, aur sukkun ho apna.

Mai khud rakhungi hisaab khate main,
Khud kholungi taala mere dukkan ka suraj ke saath,
Jahan meri kamai ho meri apni,
Aur mere khwaab aasman ke paar….

Meri dukaan mein na cigarette mile, na plastic ki bottle, na sharab ka glass.
Wahan milega chai ka pyala, kurkure ka packet, bachon ke school ka saman…
Aur ek aurat ka sapna, bilkul khas..

Meri apni ek dukaan ho,
Choti si, par sapne bade se..
Jisme imandari bikti ho, ek muskan ke saath.

The Weight We All Carry. Original illustration and poem by Arpita Raj

Drawing Inspiration

Every voice carries a story, and sometimes, the most powerful stories come from those who have spent a lifetime being unheard. During a RiseUp! workshop conducted in collaboration with Safai Karamchari Andolan, I listened to the lived experiences of women from Dalit and manual scavenging communities. Among them was a woman from Gujarat who spoke of her simple yet profound dream to open a small shop of her own. Yet, because of caste-based discrimination, she knew that many would refuse to buy from her, not because of what she sold, but because of who she was.

Her story became a powerful reminder that hope is not the absence of struggle, but the courage to continue dreaming in spite of it.

Inspired by her resilience, the poem gives voice to a dream that deserves to be seen, heard, and honoured. .It reflects an unwavering hope that reminds us why our collective pursuit of justice and equality must continue

By Arpita Raj

SparkFund Programme Coordinator
YWCA of India



WHO MOTHERS THE EARTH?

The Forest I Carry Within Me

This is my story, one shaped by the women who taught me to care, the landscapes that taught me to wonder, and the belief that even the smallest acts of love can leave a lasting impact. Through these memories, I invite you to see the world as I have come to know it: full of beauty, responsibility, and hope.

We all carry experiences and moments that shape what we do and why it matters to us, becoming the stories we tell and the reasons we find meaning in our work and lives. This is my story. My why. Without the buzzwords, the jargon, or the filters. Just as it is: real and raw.

I grew up in a place alive with beauty. As I watch it slip away through land conversions, infrastructure booms, and the construction frenzy, driven by nothing but greed, I return to the reason I began: to remember the magic.

Women have long lived in kinship with the earth. Mother Earth, it feels only fitting, for both have long known the gentle labour of sustaining life. Not through manifestos or movements, but through ordinary rituals of care: in gardens tended at dawn, in garments mended by hand, in yesterday's sari becoming tomorrow's quilt, in the last ribbon of toothpaste coaxed from its tube, and in the unmistakable disappointment of opening a Royal Dansk Butter Cookies tin to find not biscuits, but needles, thread, and the memory of careful hands. These little acts of jugaad taught us to waste less, cherish more, and believe that almost everything deserved one more life.

Before we called it sustainability, they simply called it life. Before we spoke of a regenerative economy, they were already living one.

Magic today is a consumer's market: plastic unicorns, neon glow-in-the-dark stickers, and glossy filters. But for me, magic will always be what lives abundantly in the wild, precious, yet may very soon cease to exist.



The glow of fireflies lighting up the pitch-dark night, a mystic violet crab hiding in the trees, the forest steeped in the luminous spell of bioluminescence, the rare Karvi flowers, native to the Western Ghats, unfurling once in seven years and blanketing the hillsides in a riot of colour, and the quick flash of a snake, marked in vibrant hues.

Ah, what it is to lose oneself in wonder!

This is my fortune. The mystique of the natural world is my reason, my belonging, my language, and my magic. Perhaps that is the greatest inheritance the women in my life left me: the understanding that every act of care, no matter how small, is an act of love.

By. Amanda Fernandes

RiseUp!Young Women's Transformative Leadership Lead
YWCA of India



ECHOES FROM SHIVTARAI

Listening to the Baiga and Gond Communities of Shivtarai, Chhattisgarh

Every community has a story, and every story deserves to be heard. During my field research in Shivtarai, Chhattisgarh, I had the opportunity to listen to the voices of the Baiga (PVTG) and Gond tribal communities. Their lives reflect resilience, a deep connection with nature, and a rich cultural heritage. At the same time, their experiences reveal important health and social challenges that deserve attention and compassionate action.

One of the most significant observations during the study was the widespread consumption of locally brewed Mahua alcohol. While alcohol has cultural significance in many tribal traditions, excessive consumption appeared to have serious implications for household health and nutrition. In several families, limited financial resources were spent on alcohol rather than nutritious food. As a result, many community members, particularly women and adolescent girls, appeared underweight and showed visible signs of malnutrition. Poor nutrition during childhood and adolescence may also contribute to stunted growth, resulting in reduced height and low body weight among girls, ultimately affecting their overall health and future well-being.

The voices of women also highlighted traditional menstrual practices that continue to shape everyday life. In many households, women stay separately from their husbands during menstruation, often in a different room, and eat their meals separately from the rest of the family. These customs, rooted in generations of cultural beliefs, remain an important part of community life. However, they also emphasize the need for greater awareness of menstrual health, dignity, and women's rights while respecting indigenous traditions.



These are not only stories of hardship. They are voices of hope. They remind us that lasting change begins by listening to communities, understanding their realities, and working alongside them. Strengthening nutrition programmes, promoting awareness about the harmful effects of excessive alcohol consumption, and improving access to menstrual and reproductive health education can help build healthier futures while preserving the cultural identity of the Baiga and Gond communities.

The people of Shivtarai continue to inspire hope through their resilience, traditions, and strength. Their voices call for a future where every woman, every child, and every family has the opportunity to live with dignity, good health, and equal access to care.

By. Anyrose Todar

RiseUp!Young Women's Transformative Leadership Lead
YWCA of India



Photo Wall




YWCA


Celebrating
50
YEARS IN NURSING CARE






I ♥ BVET
WEMPOWER
YWCA
NURTURING NATURE





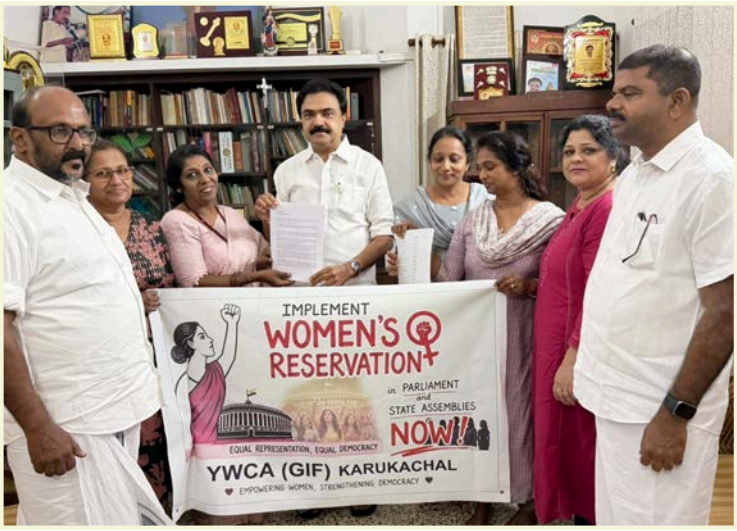





COOKING CLASS
ORGANISED BY YWCA LUNGLEI
Resource Person
Kimkimi (KVK Hnahthial)






IMPLEMENT
WOMEN'S RESERVATION
in PARLIAMENT and STATE ASSEMBLIES
NOW!!
EQUAL REPRESENTATION, EQUAL DEMOCRACY
YWCA (GIF) KARUKACHAL
EMPOWERING WOMEN, STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY






PRESS CLUB OF INDIA






YWCA OF DELHI
ECO JUSTICE LAB
Youth & Community for a Sustainable Future
ORIENTATION EVENT
INTRODUCTION OF PLASTIC COLLECTION BIN & KITCHEN COMPOST PIT
SEGREGATE • RECYCLE • COMPOST • SUSTAIN

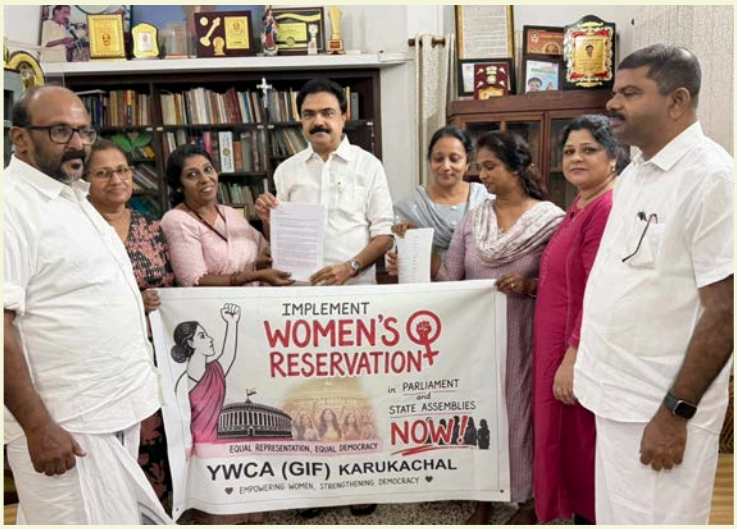





YWCA of Secunderabad
Wellpower – Leaving no one behind
Building Youth
YWCA of Secunderabad
Wellpower – Leaving no one behind
Strengthening Communities


Knowledge Partners:
Catalytic Partners:
BAALA




IMPLEMENT
WOMEN'S RESERVATION
in PARLIAMENT and STATE ASSEMBLIES
NOW!
EQUAL REPRESENTATION, EQUAL DEMOCRACY
YWCA (GIF) KARUKACHAL
EMPOWERING WOMEN, STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY


COOKING CLASS
ORGANISED BY YWCA LUNGLEI
Resource Person
Kimkhimi (KVK Hnahthial)




WORLD
HEALTH DAY




YWCA OF INDIA
YWCA
IMPLEMENT WOMEN'S RESERVATION
AFTER CENSUS AND DELIMITATION
NOW!
WE ARE ASKING FOR OUR RIGHTS
FOR EQUAL REPRESENTATION


Justice Delayed Is Not Justice Served
Representation Delayed Is Democracy Denied
YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF

FROM THE NATIONAL GENERAL SECRETARY'S DESK

"Leadership is built, not given and you are building it now." - As shared from the World YWCA's Instagram post.

YWCA of India had the opportunity to showcase the work of RiseUp! India at the Women Deliver 2026 Conference in Melbourne, Australia. While we were able to share our experience and conduct workshop on Feminist Consultation Methodology, it was truly inspiring to hear from the Pacific feminists, the First Nations leaders, the fiery Youth Leaders who created inspirations.



Witnessing the World YWCA intentionally create spaces where young women and girls could lead alongside experienced movement builders reaffirmed a simple truth: leadership is not created in moments of recognition. It is built quietly in conversations across generations, in the courage to ask difficult questions, in the willingness to listen, and in organizations that choose to believe in young women before they believe in themselves.

One of the most encouraging reflections from our RiseUp journey is that the number of young women who believe an organization can genuinely support their leadership has grown from 73% to 88%. Behind this number is something far more significant: trust. When young women experience YWCA as a place where they are heard and supported, and challenged positively if I may say so, leadership becomes possible. Yet, leadership is also sustained by something we rarely speak about. Those who hold space for others must also find spaces that restore them. We cannot build leaders if we do not also build cultures of care and belonging. Leadership is not about giving endlessly; it is about stewarding our energy so that we can continue to serve with purpose.

I see this promise in the YWCA intergenerational leadership. It is not simply experienced leaders guiding younger ones, nor young voices replacing established wisdom. It is also about creating an ecosystem for care and reflection each generation has to offer and learn from one another.

Thank you for continuing to create spaces where leadership is built every day. Together is how we can shape a future for the YWCA movement that not any one generation could build alone.

May we continue to be that kind of movement :for one another, and for every young woman who is still discovering that she belongs.

Ms. Dhiya Ann Mathew

National General Secretary
YWCA of India



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To Every Local Association, With Gratitude

Every story shared in these pages began somewhere. With a Local Association opening its doors to a woman seeking support, a volunteer giving their time, a young person discovering new opportunities, or a community coming together in hope. While this newsletter celebrates milestones and achievements, it is, above all, a celebration of the people who make them possible.

To every YWCA Local Association and Group In Formation, thank you for your unwavering commitment to serving your communities with compassion, courage, and faith. Whether your work reaches a handful of families or thousands of people, each act of service strengthens our collective movement and carries forward YWCA's enduring mission of justice, peace, and human dignity.
As we come to the close of this Quadrennium, we celebrate not only what has been accomplished, but the spirit that has made it possible, a movement built on partnership, resilience, and the belief that no community is too small and no act of service is insignificant.

May you continue to lead with hope, respond with compassion, and inspire change wherever you serve. Together, we have shown that when we walk alongside one another, no one is left behind.

Thank you for being the heart of YWCA of India.

Call for Editorials: Building Youth

What does “Building Youth” mean to you?

For the next edition of the YWCA of India newsletter, we invite leaders, members, youth, and volunteers, across the YWCA family to share their thoughts opinions and experiences on **Building Youth.**

Send us story, reflection, poem, artwork, photograph, or a creative piece that captures what youth means to you. It can be a story that stayed with you, a young person who challenged or inspired you, a moment of learning, a youth-led initiative, or a vision for creating spaces where young people can lead and be heard.

You can send your contribution to headoffice@ywcaindia.org by 31st August 2026.

Awe to Me

Walking through the lanes,
Some never crossed; some dared
Like a tiny thread
Seemingly insignificant,
Yet intact enough.

Wings to snatch the wind
For me, for them and for others.
I stepped in,
nervous,
With a giant sigh.

Now I know
Unknowingly
I am chained,
To the great change
Felt silently yet strongly.

by Ananya
RiseUp! Master Trainer

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The stories in these pages belong to many hands, and many more beyond this Newsletter. It belongs to every Local Association, volunteer, partner, donor, staff member, and community who has walked alongside us. Together, we have strengthened livelihoods, nurtured leadership, responded to crises, advocated for justice, and created spaces where hope continues to grow. As we close the final year of this Quadrennium, we celebrate not only what has been achieved, but the countless lives, relationships, and communities that have shaped this journey. Thank you for being part of the YWCA of India family and for helping us build communities where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Enabling Women. Building Communities. Ushering Change.

