

Campaign  
Newsletter  
2024

*Adolescents as Changemakers*

**#HarKadamBetiKeSang**  
*Mil Ke Laye Badlav Hum*

November 11 - 25, 2024





## Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we conclude the fifth edition of our annual flagship campaign, Har Kadam Beti Ke Sang, I am delighted to reflect on the incredible journey we've shared in empowering adolescents as changemakers.

Over the past four years, our campaign has successfully highlighted critical issues such as girls' education, leadership, and digital empowerment. This year, we focused on life skills as the cornerstone for creating a more gender-equal world!

Through this campaign, we provided adolescents, particularly girls, with opportunities and platforms to drive meaningful change within their families, schools, and communities. These young leaders have demonstrated how life skills can challenge stereotypes, break barriers, and foster lasting positive impacts.

From 11th to 25th November, we successfully engaged over 50,000 adolescents, doubling the number we aimed for, across nine states through innovative initiatives like Kishori Melas, Change Conversations with parents and educators, and our mobile life skills library— 'Life Skills on Wheels'. These efforts have brought us closer to a more equitable and inclusive society.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support. Together, we have amplified the voices of these adolescents and continue to walk hand in hand with them—

**“हर कदम बेटी के संग—मिल के लिए बदलाव हम”.**

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Happy Reading!

**Poornima Garg**

Country Director

## Core Beliefs of Our Life Skills Work

1

We believe that life skills enable young people to become agile, adaptive learners and responsible citizens equipped to navigate personal, academic, social, and economic challenges.

2

Room to Read's Girls' Education Program views an adolescent as an active individual with a strong sense of self and agency, developed through life skills education. By observing others and engaging in critical questioning aligned with her values, she constructs knowledge through societal interactions.

3

Self-efficacy plays a vital role in her success, influenced by a relatable learning facilitator who inspires and guides her through challenges.

4

Encouragement from her environment initiates change, reinforced by various reminders.

5

Supportive educational systems empower her to reach her full potential, promoting positive social attitudes and essential skills for navigating life's complexities effectively.

*For us, girls' education goes beyond simply getting girls into school. It is about ensuring that they learn and feel safe while in school; have the opportunity to complete all levels of education; acquire the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the labor market; and develop the socio-emotional and life skills necessary to navigate and adapt to a changing world. It also helps them to empower themselves to make informed decisions about their own lives and contribute meaningfully to their communities and society.*



## About the Campaign

Every adolescent holds the incredible power to transform their world, yet not all have the resources to unlock their full potential. India, home to over 253 million adolescents—47% of them female—has one of the world's largest adolescent populations (UNFPA, UNCIEF, Census, et.al). These young individuals, brimming with energy and resilience, are powerful agents of change, ready to challenge societal norms and build a more equitable future. Room to Read India's annual flagship Girls' Education campaign, Har Kadam Beti Ke Sang, is a testament to this spirit. In 2024, the campaign celebrated adolescents as changemakers—those who have broken gender stereotypes, stood up for themselves, and transformed not only their own lives but also the lives of those around them. Their journey of empowerment has been fueled by the life skills they have gained through the unwavering support of our Girls' Education Program.



## Life Skills: A Catalyst for Change

Life skills are more than just personal development—they are a driving force for social transformation. For adolescent girls, particularly in environments of gender disparity, life skills serve as a foundation for empowerment, enabling them to challenge norms, make informed decisions, and shape their futures.

Room to Read focuses on ten core life skills—self-confidence, emotional management, empathy, self-control, critical thinking, decision-making, perseverance, communication, creative problem-solving, and relationship building. These competencies equip girls to navigate life's challenges, resist societal pressures like early marriage, and advocate for their rights. Studies show that life skills education significantly enhances girls' agency, improving educational attainment, economic opportunities, and overall well-being.

### Adolescent Voices, Adolescent Choices

Empowered adolescents develop a strong sense of self and agency. Voice—the ability to express opinions—and choice—the capacity to make decisions—are critical to their empowerment. Research shows that when adolescents feel heard and in control of their futures, they are more likely to continue education and reject harmful practices like early marriage. Creating spaces where girls can express themselves and engage in decision-making strengthens their confidence and aspirations.

### Breaking Gender Stereotypes

For generations, gender norms have confined girls to limited roles, restricting their potential. Har Kadam Beti Ke Sang challenges these stereotypes, encouraging girls to pursue their ambitions without societal limitations. Whether in science, leadership, or sports, girls deserve the freedom to explore diverse opportunities.

Representation is key—when girls see women excelling in various fields, they realize they, too, can break barriers. By fostering an environment where girls can challenge norms, take risks, and lead change, we create a more inclusive and progressive society. When girls thrive, families, communities, and nations prosper.

## Outreach

The campaign successfully engaged stakeholders at multiple levels, reaching

**117 schools** across  
**17 districts** in  
**9 states**, ensuring  
widespread impact



**States**  
**9**



**Adolescents**  
**64,000**



**Community Members**  
**12,000**



**Teachers**  
**2,395**



**Parents**  
**11,000**



**Government Officials**  
**212**



## Social Media Glossary



**Total Impressions**  
**1,41,483**

**Total Engagement**  
**18,506**

**Engagements**  
**10,540**

**Impressions**  
**61,871**



**Engagements**  
**4,201**

**Impressions**  
**24,950**



**Engagements**  
**2,316**

**Impressions**  
**24,188**



**Engagements**  
**1,203**

**Impressions**  
**13,074**



**Engagements**  
**246**

**Impressions**  
**17,400**



**Campaign Newsletter**



## Key Activities



Spanning nine Indian states, the campaign brought its vision to life through a range of innovative and meaningful activities.

**Life Skills on Wheels** was a mobile initiative that delivered essential learning directly to communities, ensuring accessibility for all. Engaging video series like *Hausle Ki Dagar* and the *Swayam Series* made life skills education interactive and impactful.

**The Life Skills Advisory Panel** furthered this mission by bringing together advocates to integrate life skills education into school curricula. By empowering teachers and collaborating with local stakeholders, the campaign laid the foundation for lasting change.

On November 11, National Education Day, our campaign was launched nationwide with a special video message from our Country Director advocating for empowering adolescents through life skills for bringing change in the world. This message was shared with adolescents and other stakeholders through the school's digital labs and various online platforms. Additionally, a custom campaign WhatsApp profile picture (DP) was distributed to everyone, allowing supporters to show their solidarity and spread awareness about the campaign.

The **Wall Mural Initiative** transformed schools and public spaces into vibrant canvases of hope, where bold artwork challenged gender stereotypes and promoted education for







all—especially for girls. The campaign’s highlight was the **Kishori Mela**, themed #Me and My Idea, where adolescents showcased their ideas through art, petitions, and dialogue with community leaders. This event celebrated their role as changemakers and problem-solvers.

The campaign also featured screenings of six high-quality animated and live-action films from Room to Read’s **She**

**Creates Change film series.** These films depicted how adolescent girls from around the world, including India, navigate challenges and use life skills to drive change in their communities. Following the screenings, interactive discussions captured participants’ reflections on topics ranging from climate justice to financial literacy and gender-based discrimination.

To further raise awareness, **Nukkad Natak** performances were staged across communities, portraying adolescent girls as empowered changemakers. These dynamic street plays blended education with entertainment, captivating diverse audiences. A puppet show also brought to life the struggles girls face and how life skills empower them to overcome obstacles, emphasizing resilience, communication, and problem-solving.

The campaign encouraged intergenerational dialogue through **Change Conversations**, where parents and adolescents engaged in discussions using a gamified approach, **Khel Khel Mein**. These sessions fostered family conversations on the importance of girls’ education, building collective understanding and support.

The “Life Skills Se Parivartan” webinar showcased powerful stories of transformation. Participants shared how life skills sessions reshaped their lives, boosting confidence and enabling them to drive change in their homes and communities. Success stories from Girls’ Education Program (GEP) alumnae inspired others, reinforcing the belief that self-confidence fuels aspirations and empowers them to create a better future.

Together, these initiatives ignited a powerful movement, making change a shared responsibility among adolescents, educators, families, and communities. They empowered young individuals to rise, lead, and shape a world where every voice is heard, every choice matters, and every step forward is taken together.



## State Highlights

### Uttarakhand

#### Life Skills Summit: Empowering Change Through Education



On November 21, Room to Read, under its Girls' Education Program (GEP), hosted the Life Skills Summit to advance gender equality and life skills education. A highlight of the summit was the alumnae experience-sharing session. Nikita Chauhan spoke about developing empathy and self-expression within her family. Arti shared her leadership journey in tackling child marriage and child labor. Shikha discussed how life skills boosted her self-confidence and strengthened her bond with her father, while Suman described challenging societal norms within her family. Their powerful narratives earned admiration from attending principals.

The panel discussion, "Redefining Boundaries: Role of Life Skills in Breaking Gender Norms," featured Shri Rakesh Chand Gairola, Mrs. Shubhra Single, Rohit Gupta, Neha, and alumnae Mantasha. Panelists stressed the importance of life skills in challenging gender stereotypes and ensuring equal opportunities for boys and girls. Shri Gairola introduced key state programs like Kaushalam, Anandam, Bal Sakha Prakoshth, and 21st Century Skills.

Organizations such as Dream a Dream, Mountain Children Foundation, Bachpan Bachao Andolan, Dhaad, and Udyam actively participated. Mrs. Bhavana Naithani commended Satrangi Comics for its creative approach to life skills education. The summit concluded with a vote of thanks by Mr. Arvind Bisht, reinforcing the collective commitment to empowering adolescent girls and fostering an inclusive, gender-equal society.





## Delhi



A series of Nukkad Natak was conducted to raise awareness about the importance of life skills in today's world. It aimed to highlight how life skills are essential for overcoming everyday challenges, especially for girls, and how these skills can empower individuals to create positive changes in their surroundings. The play not only entertained but also served as an eye-opener for the audience about the critical role life skills play in personal and community development. During the event, women from the community shared their thoughts, emphasizing that life skills are essential for everyone in today's world, as they enable individuals to solve problems effectively. Some women admitted that they were previously unaware of life skills, but the street play helped them understand and recognize their significance in daily life.

## Rajasthan



The screenings of **She Creates Change videos** were highly appreciated by students, who were eager to discuss the key messages of each film. The post-screening discussions provided a platform for participants to share their perspectives and relate the films to their own lives. The activity fostered a supportive environment for students to reflect on their challenges, learn from the stories, and feel empowered to overcome obstacles in their personal and academic journeys. The Reading Corner was a big hit among students and parents, as they explored the Satrangi Series comic books and shared their thoughts through group discussions. The Literacy Cloud activity, where students scanned codes to access gender-equality stories, was particularly well-received, with teachers praising it as an innovative and engaging learning tool.





## Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand



The She Creates Change video screenings ignited powerful discussions and deep personal reflections among participants. Each story resonated in unique ways, inspiring self-awareness, confidence, and resilience.

Yashika's story struck a chord with one participant, who shared her own experience with Karate and emphasized its role in building confidence and strength.

Keya's journey was particularly inspiring, motivating a participant to confront her fears and build self-confidence. She expressed admiration for how the girls in the videos applied life skills to navigate their struggles, vowing to integrate similar strategies into her own life.

Trang's video underscored the reality that life presents continuous challenges, but with perseverance and essential life skills, they can be overcome.

The stories of Diksha, Dewmini, and Naifat further deepened this understanding, emphasizing that every challenge has a solution. Dewmini's story was especially impactful, as one participant admired her ability to confront adversity with critical thinking. Inspired by this, she resolved to approach obstacles in her own life with a problem-solving mindset. Diksha's video encouraged participants to reflect on how they could support their friends in challenging situations, reinforcing the importance of standing together.

The post-screening discussions strengthened participants' connections with the narratives, sparking self-reflection and a renewed commitment to personal growth. The screenings reinforced that confidence, determination, and critical thinking are essential in navigating life's hurdles. Through these stories, participants gained not just inspiration but also a roadmap for resilience and success.



## Gender Equality Pledge

### *Gender Equality Pledge*

*As an individual who envisions a gender-equal world and peace for everyone, I pledge to actively support gender equality in my life. This pledge reflects my values and commitment, acknowledging that true equality requires ongoing effort and reflection.*

*I, (Your Name), solemnly pledge that:*

- I will work to create safe, respectful, and inclusive environments for everyone, regardless of their gender identity.*
- I will educate myself about gender issues and understand the different experiences of people across the gender spectrum.*
- I will regularly reflect on my actions and beliefs to identify and challenge biases or behaviors that contribute to inequality.*
- I will speak up against stereotypes and biases, both in myself and in others.*
- I will stand in solidarity with individuals facing discrimination or bias based on their gender.*
- I will support initiatives that promote equal opportunities for all genders in education, employment, and leadership roles.*
- I will engage in open and honest conversations about gender equality, even when these discussions are challenging.*
- I will listen to and amplify the voices of those who are often marginalized in discussions about gender equality.*
- I will advocate for inclusive policies and practices in my workplace, community, and social circles.*
- I will welcome feedback and be willing to change my actions in the pursuit of a more equitable world.*

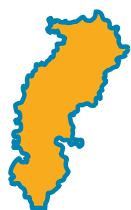
*By taking this pledge, I commit to being an active participant in the movement toward gender equality. I recognize that this journey is ongoing and requires dedication, humility, and a willingness to learn from others. Together, we can create a society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.*

*Sign Here: -----*

*Date: -----*



## Chhattisgarh



The Life Skills on Wheels initiative brought education to the doorstep of communities fostering interactive learning and engagement. The mobile van featured gender-focused books, an audio-visual library, and interactive life skills activities, creating a dynamic learning space. Parents and adolescents explored Satrangi Comics, career cards, and QR-coded books, sparking discussions on resilience and decision-making. The community praised the initiative's practicality and real-life relevance, reinforcing the power of mobile education in strengthening life skills. The event successfully bridged learning gaps, making life skills education accessible, engaging, and impactful for diverse audiences.

## Madhya Pradesh



The Kishori Mela was a vibrant and immersive celebration, transforming the school into a dynamic hub of learning and engagement. A diverse range of activities—games, quizzes, and reflective exercises—created an electrifying fair-like atmosphere. GEP materials were prominently displayed, fostering an interactive and hands-on learning experience.

Through powerful writing exercises, adolescent girls shared how life skills education had transformed their lives. One girl expressed that these lessons helped her recognize the value of education, leading to improved academic performance. Discussions on gender equality further underscored how life skills empower girls to challenge societal norms and advocate for their rights.

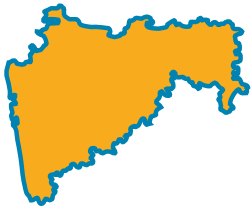
The active participation of teachers and SMC members enriched the event, reinforcing the importance of integrating life skills into everyday learning. Educators lauded life skills education as essential for holistic development, emphasizing that it is just as critical as





academic excellence. School authorities also praised the Satrangi Comic for its compelling portrayal of life skills, recognizing its role in making these concepts accessible and relatable.

## Maharashtra



As part of our campaign, students participated in the Thanksgiving Letters activity, a heartfelt initiative that allowed them to express deep gratitude to their parents for their unwavering support in continuing their education. Through these letters, children not only acknowledged the relentless dedication, sacrifices, and hard work of their parents but also reflected on the profound impact of this support in shaping their future. For many students, this was the first time they openly articulated their appreciation, making the activity an emotional and transformative experience. The letters became powerful testaments to the resilience of families who, despite challenges, prioritize education as a means of empowerment. Beyond strengthening the bond between students and their families, this initiative ignited meaningful conversations on the value of education, reinforcing its role as a collective aspiration rather than an individual pursuit.

Mom and Dad, you are my pillars of strength. Despite the challenges, you never let my education suffer. Many people may try to mislead you, but please never be influenced by them. Your unwavering belief in me has given my life a meaningful direction.- Risa Prajapati

One of the greatest gifts you have given me is the value of education. Many children do not get this opportunity, but you have ensured that I receive a good education. Your hard work and dedication motivate me every day.





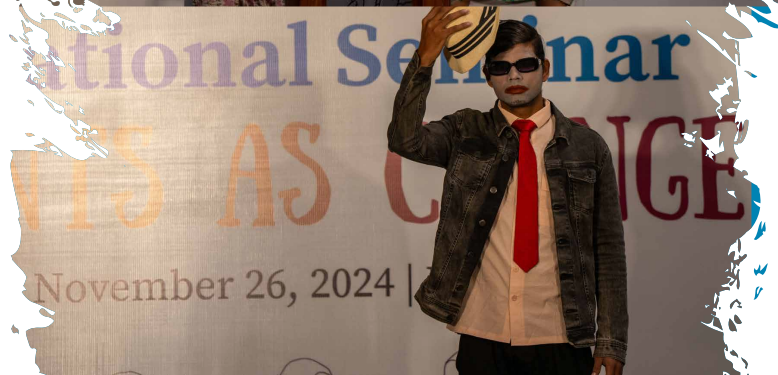
## National Seminar

### Har Kadam Beti Ke Sang

On November 26, 2024, Room to Read India hosted a national seminar to mark the conclusion of the fifth edition of its campaign, “Adolescents as Changemakers makers.” The seminar celebrated the transformative role of adolescents in challenging stereotypes, advancing gender equality, and driving societal change. Through a series of engaging sessions and panel discussions, the event highlighted the critical importance of equipping young people with life skills to lead social transformation.

The seminar opened with remarks by Mr. Rishi Rajvanshi, Director of Innovations and Donor Engagement, who reflected on the milestones of the Girls’ Education Campaign and its integration with the “She Creates Change” initiative, emphasising the role of young girls as agents of change. A keynote address by Padma Shri awardee Urvashi Butalia, Founder of Zubaan Publications, highlighted the evolving role of adolescents in reshaping India’s socio-cultural landscape, focusing on gender, technology, and agency. She praised Room to Read India for its significant contributions to gender equality.





The seminar featured theatrical performances on masculinity and gender dynamics, followed by a panel on “Unpacking Masculinities in Adolescent Boys,” which discussed redefining masculinity and creating safe spaces for boys to challenge stereotypes. Another session, “Adolescent Voices - Change Conversation,” featured a dialogue between Room to Read alumna Ms. Lakshmi Kumari Yadav and Program Officer Ms. Poornima Narang, showcasing the power of adolescent agency in societal change. The final panel, “Sustaining Change, Empowering Adolescents,” focused on policies and strategies to ensure sustainable empowerment for adolescents, emphasising inclusive and gender-sensitive approaches.

The seminar concluded with the screening of the “She Creates Change” video and a vote of thanks by Nimrat Singh, Director of People Operations. The event reinforced the pivotal role of adolescents as active change makers and their capacity to reshape societal narratives for a more equitable future.



## Call for Action

### Empower Adolescents, Transform the World

Keep supporting our adolescents! We believe that within each young adult lies the power to reshape their own lives, their communities, and the world at large. But too often, the voices and struggles of adolescents, especially those facing complex intersections of gender and economic disparity, are ignored.

This is a call to keep supporting the adolescents!

#### Here's what you can do:

1. **Reflect:** Take a moment to consider the challenges faced by adolescents in your community and beyond. Acknowledge the intersectional issues that create barriers to their growth and potential.
2. **Listen:** Seek out and amplify the voices of young people. Create spaces for them to share their experiences, ideas, and solutions.
3. **Act:** Support initiatives that promote gender equality, economic opportunity, and access to resources for adolescents.
4. **Advocate:** Speak out against injustice and inequality. Advocate for policies and programs that empower young people to thrive.

Let's empower adolescents to transform the world, starting with themselves!

#### Highlights



#### Readings

You can access the UNGEI's Gender Transformative Education Glossary [here](#), which offers a comprehensive guide to terms related to gender equality in education. This dynamic resource helps standardize definitions, ensuring a shared understanding of key concepts, and is regularly updated to reflect evolving terminology and ideas.



## Our Smiling Stars









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