



UMANG Vaani Newsletter

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9th Edition

March 2024

Stepping Forward with Umang

The closing workshop of the Umang project was held on February 19, 2024, in the conference hall of J.E.P.C. (Jharkhand Education Project Council), Ranchi. The program was inaugurated by Mr. Jayant Kumar Mishra (Administrative Officer, J.E.P.C.) About 150 people from the Education Department, Health Department, Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society, Panchayati Raj, Ranchi University, officials of all departments, and non-governmental organizations were present in the workshop. At the program's start, adolescent girls associated with Umang performed the song "Par Laga Liye Humne," which they had prepared. Through this song, they aimed to convey that now we do not have to stop and keep moving forward. During the program, representatives from various sections of society and other non-governmental organizations associated with the Umang project expressed their views on the successful operation of the Umang project and its positive impact.

The Umang program has been implemented in two blocks each in Godda and Jamtara districts of Jharkhand.

Through various activities, Umang has reached approximately 280,000 adolescent girls, their parents, members of self-help groups, and men and boys directly through talks and other means of communication, and indirectly, it has reached about 400,000 people. The program presented an account of the last 4 years of the Umang project, its impact and achievement on adolescent education, and prevention of child marriage in front of everyone.

Dr. Ravi Verma, Executive Director of ICRW Asia, said, "Learning from the facts and results of the implementation of Umang program, we need programs that focus on the multidimensional and inclusive development of adolescent girls to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)."

At the end of the program, the adolescent girls associated with the Umang group gave the message of gender equality to the participants through street play.



Dear Readers,

Johar/Namaste!

I am extremely pleased to share with you the 9th edition of UMANG Vaani.

The story of Umang is the story of resilience, courage and clarity of vision of Sangeeta Marandi, Sushila Kumari, Sunita Hembram, Purnima Murmu, Pinky Kumari, and many more adolescents like them. It is a story of forging one's aspiration despite the stronghold and entrenched patriarchal hold. We are privileged to be a part of their journey and struggle. We are proud that they made us a part of their lives and gave us the opportunity to learn and refine our perspective on what gender and gendered struggles mean in daily life. Umang is also the story of our many team members and their commitment, values, and solidarity with the ICRW mission.

I congratulate all of you at this milestone of UMANG and hope we will continue to be fellow travellers on this enriching journey.

I hope you would enjoy reading it!

Dr. Ravi Verma
Executive Director
ICRW Asia

*Sangeeta Maradi, Sushila Kumari (Umang Vaani 5), Sunita Hembram (Umang Vaani 4), Purnima Murmu (Umang Vaani 7), Pinky Kumari (Umang Vaani 6)

“Umang is a very good program for empowerment of adolescent girls. Certainly, the adolescent girls have become empowered and are talking to their mothers and their homes about their education, marriage, aspirations, and dreams.”

Purnima Mukherjee
State Program Officer
SBIB & SISD
(Social Mobilization & Institution Building and Social Inclusion & Social Development) JSLPS



The enthusiasm of Umang... with theatre...

Renowned American theatre expert Eve Ensler had said, "Theatre has an incredible ability to move people towards social change, to address issues, to inspire social change." In keeping with this thought, under the Umang project, like the last two years, this year too, a community-focused street play campaign presented by trained artists to promote gender equality and prevention of child marriage and personality development workshops for adolescents was organized.

The Hon'ble District Deputy Commissioner of Jamtara district, Mr. Shashi Bhushan Mehra, inaugurated the community-focused street play campaign from the Jamtara Deputy Commissioner's office premises. While watching the street play, the Deputy Commissioner appreciated this unique initiative of Umang to reach out to the villagers in such an easy and entertaining way on important issues like gender equality. This entire campaign staged a total of 152 street plays in 31 villages and 82 schools of Narayanpur, Nala, Jamtara, Mahagama, and Godda blocks of Jamtara and Godda districts, in which about 40,000 villagers and school students participated. People from all sections of society, teachers and teenagers, liked this street play and the story shown in it and found it useful.

Under another initiative, the third phase of the 5-day theatre-based communication and personality development workshop was organized by Umang in December 2023, in which a total of 29 adolescents participated and, like in the previous phases, gained training on issues such as public speaking, understanding of issues, interpersonal communication, how to convey one's thoughts and dreams to others through drama in a creative way through theatre, and presented a total 6 street plays during the workshop. In the next phase, they will perform at their village level and convey messages related to important issues like gender equality to the people. It is noteworthy that the adolescents of Kalipahari village of Nala block and Bewa village of Jamtara block, who had participated in these workshops, staged a play in the auditorium during the Umang closing ceremony held at J.E.P.C. auditorium in Ranchi, which was appreciated by all the guests present at the ceremony and the artists were encouraged.



GEMS: Capacity building of teachers, headmasters and other stakeholders on gender perspective

To promote gender equality, these issues must be discussed with children from an early age through various socialization processes so that they know and understand gender-based work and responsibilities, expectations, and right and wrong. Understanding the importance of schools and teachers in this process, the gender perspective of teachers, headmasters and other stakeholders was enhanced under the GEMS program. Trainings were organized in three phases (three days each phase) with about 600 teachers of GEMS schools from two districts of the program, Godda and Jamtara, in which detailed activity-based discussions were held on gender, gender-based violence, power, physical and mental changes in adolescence, dialogue, mutual relations, life skills, nutrition and addiction issues. A one-day workshop was organized with the headmasters of 271 GEMS schools, BRP/CRP of the respective blocks, in which their role and action plan in creating a gender-equal environment in schools was discussed.

As per the commitment of National Education Policy 2020 to make education gender inclusive, after MoU (2023) between JCERT and ICRW, a three-day training of master trainers of Santhal Pargana districts (Godda, Deogarh, Dumka, Sahebganj, Pakur and Jamtara) was arranged to discuss these issues in state-level schools so that they can ensure training in collaboration with ICRW for capacity building of teachers of various schools in their districts.

In view of the important role of School Management Committee (SMC) in the vision of schools, JCERT has recommended ICRW to conduct capacity-building training for Management Committee members.

ICRW, in collaboration with JCERT, conducted a gender audit of the curriculum to incorporate gender perspectives into the curriculum of each subject. Gender equality is a continuous process, and GEMS is a small but important step in that direction. It is necessary that understanding its sensitivity, more and more people should be connected to this campaign so that it can reach everyone.



Filled with enthusiasm, a 65-year-old Haradhan Marandi.....

This is the story of a 65-year-old youth. 65 years and young !! Yes, we are talking about the village champion of Rangasola village, Haradhan Marandi. When he was selected as the village champion of the Manthan project, like you, we were also wondering whether this old man would be able to walk shoulder to shoulder with the other youth who are almost half his age and associated with the project. Believe us, the way we had this thought, precisely opposite to it, was the truth of Haradhan ji regularly participating in the male engagement sessions during Umang, the truth of re-enrolling a drop-out teenager of the village in school with the help of Umang and most importantly the truth of his hold on the people of the village, perhaps that's why this 65-year-old youth joined us again along with about 49 other youth and became an important part of the Manthan project. The only difference was that earlier Haradhan ji joined us as a participant; this time, he was responsible for connecting other participants with us.

It is noteworthy that Haradhan ji is a responsible and important village champion of the Manthan project, whose thinking and understanding on gender equality probably started developing during the male engagement session of the Umang project. Still, the 3-day gender-based workshop of the Manthan project gave him the courage and passion to spread this thinking of gender to the adolescents of his community. Therefore, from December 2022 till now, Haradhan ji has formed a group of about 20 to 25 youth and adolescents in his villages, from where he is spreading the message of gender equality to the people, sometimes by performing street plays, sometimes by holding meetings with people of the community and sometimes by preparing a football team of adolescent girls.

Haradhan ji, is truly a champion, and this continuous journey teaches us that age inequality does not matter in front of equality of thinking.



What they said....

Education is a weapon that determines our entire life, and it is necessary for boys and girls to have equal opportunities. The Umang program has given a new direction to the self-confidence and aspirations of adolescent girls. And it is our responsibility to take it forward.

Dr. Gopal Krishna Jha,
District Education Officer,
Jamtara



Under the Umang program, the sessions conducted with adolescent girls in the school have been very informative, showing self-confidence in the girls. Also, the girls have started talking openly about their dreams and their studies.

Dr. Abhinav Kumar
State Program Officer-Quality
Education, Jharkhand Education
Project Council, Ranchi



Through small sessions on issues related to empowerment and gender equality in the Umang program, the girls are getting inspired and implementing them in their lifestyle. As a result, the rate of child marriage of girls has decreased in Godda district.

Sangeeta Kumari
Faculty Member cum Incharge,
Gender Equality Department, JCERT



By regularly associating with child protection committees, Umang has made commendable efforts at the district, block and village level, especially by actively supporting the village child protection committees and ensuring monthly meetings. It has played an important role in creating awareness in society and reaching out to vulnerable children.

Anju Poddar
District Child Protection Officer, Jamtara



The Umang project has given a new direction to teenage leadership and has worked to reduce the gender gap, which is commendable.

Sahyogini
(Umang Partner Organisation)



Umang girls are shining brighter than diamonds. They are promoting gender equality and negotiating for their rights. We are proud to be part of their development journey.

Bangla Natak Dot Com
(Umang Partner
Organisation)



During Umang, various activities were conducted with the adolescent girls in the village, resulting in the adolescent girls' confidence increasing a lot. Now they are speaking up. Continuing education or participating in sports has become a part of their lives. Such programs are very much needed in rural areas.

Hiramuni Soren
(Mukhiya, Maralo Panchayat, Nala)



I thank Umang team for giving me the opportunity to help girls and boys in the school to establish gender equality. Because gender equality is not just a women's issue, it touches all sections of our community.

Vivek Kumar Choudhary
Government High School,
Saidpur, Godda



The Umang program was outstanding, especially the experience of working shoulder to shoulder with the government machinery was commendable, due to which the adolescent girls and youth of this area became very empowered on the issue of gender violence and the institution also had a commendable experience of working with the girls and youth.

Badlaav Foundation
(Umang Partner Organisation)



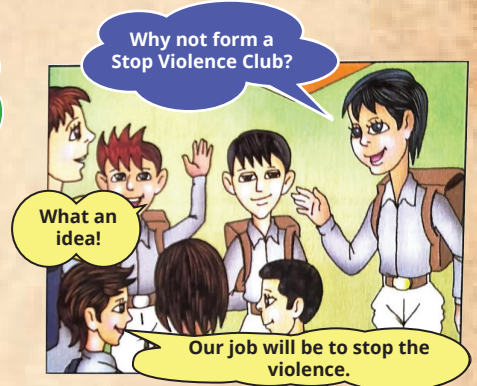
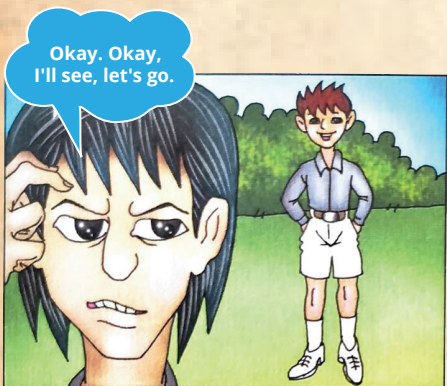
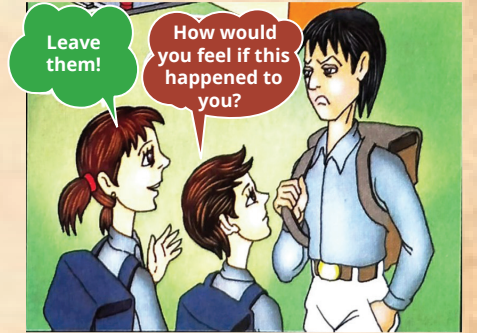
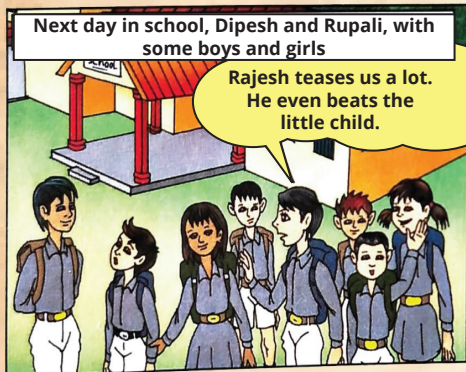
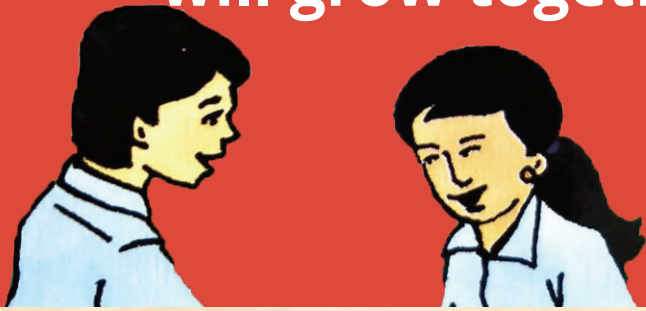
GEMS gave a Courage...., GEMS gave a voice....



I have always experienced violence since childhood. Sometimes at the bus stop, sometimes on the way in the bus, and sometimes in the hostel. Once while studying in the eighth class, I was standing at the bus stop when a 40-year-old man came to me and offered me money and asked to come with him. I ran and sat on the bus, and that man came and sat next to me. I was very scared but could not do anything. Somehow, I managed to reach home. This is one incident, whereas many such incidents happening, sometimes staring, touching etc. But due to fear, I could never tell my family members nor was I able to oppose anyone I kept suffering silently and regretting. During GEMS training, when the issue of violence was discussed, especially sexual violence, I got courage from there and found this issue related to me. When I started discussing these issues with children, I realized that we were teaching children, but were we protecting ourselves? And after that, I started protesting. Now if someone does such an act, I immediately protested against it and shared it with my family members. A few days ago, while travelling on a bus, the bus conductor was staring at me repeatedly. I immediately reprimanded him and also told my husband about it when I came home. In this way, I can say that such discussions will instil confidence in teachers and adolescent girls and will help them to tackle such situations.

Mariam Baski
Teacher, Upgraded Higher Secondary School, Machkhad, Podiyahaat, Godda

Will not be afraid, will grow together



To know more about Umang Project, please see the link below:

<https://www.icrw.org/projects/umang-2/>



Gratitude

We are grateful to (IKEA) Foundation for supporting the **Umang program**. We thank our local partner – Badlao Foundation (Jamtara) – for their support in creating and disseminating this magazine.

The following members of the Umang team have contributed significantly to conceptualizing and writing Umang Vaani: – **ICRW** – Dr. Ravi Verma, Amajit Mukherjee, Pranita Achyut, Dr. Nasreen Jamal, Paras Verma, Bineet Jha, Triloki Nath, Rana Chakraborty, Priya Pandit, Sakti Ghosh, Anurag Paul, Tapas Samaddar and Kamlesh Kumar.

Badlao Foundation – Arvind Kumar, Ramroop Singh.

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