From Fields to Futures: 25 Years of Digital Empowerment

A photo exhibition

For over two decades, IT for Change has been at the forefront of digital transformation through impactful field projects. Our work spans three broad areas: community informatics that places digital infrastructure in women's hands, adolescent girls' empowerment that builds agency in both online and offline spaces, and equitable EdTech integration within public education systems.

From women-led information centers serving as trusted digital hubs in remote villages and adolescent girls using Instagram to challenge patriarchal norms in Kannada, to teachers facilitating safe spaces for digital learning in government schools—we invite you on this visual journey documenting what happens when technology is placed in the hands of those historically excluded from it.

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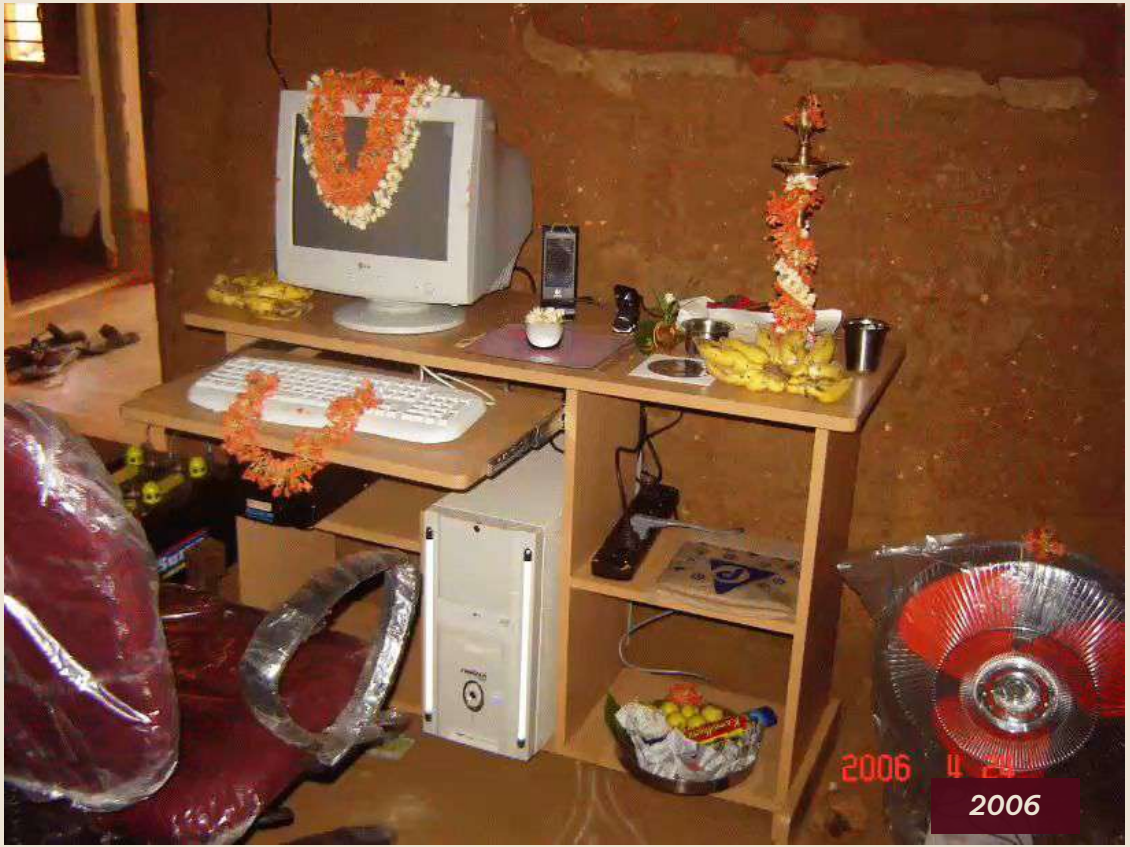
Prakriye: Mysuru field unit for Gender and Digital Empowerment

Since 2005, Prakriye has worked across villages in Hunsur and H.D. Kote blocks of Mysuru district, partnering with women's self-help groups to build collective spaces that women lead and own. At the heart of this work are Namma Mahiti Kendras—women-led community information centers that function as digital hubs where women gather, learn, access government schemes, and create media in their own language.

Young women infomediaries called Sakhis run these centers, traveling by scooter to reach remote villages and groups traditionally excluded from digital systems—tribal women, widows, single mothers, and women with disabilities. The centers now reach over 15,000 community members annually, processing welfare claims and building women's digital capabilities through 24 active women's forums reaching 850 women leaders.

This digital ecosystem extends to adolescent girls through media-based empowerment programs that combine digital storytelling, community radio, IVR messaging, and videos.



2006

The First Community Information Centre

The first women-led community information centre's inauguration in 2005 at Attiguppe village in Hunsur block. These information centres have been pivotal in bridging last mile connectivity to villages, especially to marginalized women, across Mysuru. They ensure people's access to information and their rightful social welfare entitlements. Owned and led by women, these information centres have also challenged traditionally male-dominated information channels in villages.

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The First Sakhi

Usha, the first Sakhi of the women-led Community Information Centre in Attiguppe, Hunsur, uses the computer. Over the years, Sakhis have become trusted infomediaries, bringing governance directly to village communities. The Sakhi bridges government departments and villagers, identifying those most in need and connecting them to critical services.

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Riding Towards Change

Radha and Savitha, Sakhis of information centres in Attiguppe and Mullur respectively, ride a bike in Attiguppe, Hunsur. They are on the way to outreach villages to disseminate information. The duo learned to ride the bike after becoming infomediaries, in order to easily travel to outreach villages for work.

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Women Behind the Lens

Elected women representatives of Dodda Hejjur grama panchayat, Hunsur learn to use digicam. The women are required to take photographs to document various panchayat works. Earlier, they hired photographers for it, which was not just delaying their work but was also expensive.

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Women Behind the Lens

A Dodda Hejjur grama panchayat representative photographs school children participating in summer holiday activities, alongside the school principal. The training demystified photography for women who had previously believed the skill belonged exclusively to men.

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2008

From Grassroots to the Capital

Thaayamma, a Sangha woman from Chamanahallihundi village, HD Kote, learns to use a handycamera. She acquired videography skills to document her journey to New Delhi as a chosen representative of 'Mahila Samakhya' federation of women's collectives. The footage she shot, combined with her narration, was edited into the video 'Halliyinda Dillige' (From Village to Delhi).

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Selfie Before Smartphones

Kaveri, an adolescent in Hosavaranchi, captures a self-portrait with a digital camera in 2010–11, before mobile phones with cameras became widespread in rural areas. This moment was part of the Kishori Chitrapata program, which developed a media-based curriculum to empower out-of-school adolescent girls with life skills through photography and self-expression.

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The Self and the Selfie

Adolescent girls in Hebbalaguppe, HD Kote, take a selfie at the 'Gender and Tech Mela' organized by Prakriye. The fair featured stalls equipped with tablets and mobile phones offering digital content on adolescent nutrition, career guidance, crossword puzzles, and interactive activities addressing social issues like dowry. For many girls, this was their first time using a tablet—their excitement is palpable. More than 50 girls participated in the event.

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Community Journalism

Over the years, girls from rural Mysuru learn to record videos and click photos with handycameras and, more recently, on mobile phones. They are seen interviewing villagers to capture their daily chores and getting insights into the village's history. The girls navigated initial resistance from their families and the village community that raised questions about their presence in public spaces. By the end of the training module, they had built rapport with the community and invited villagers to their photo exhibition.

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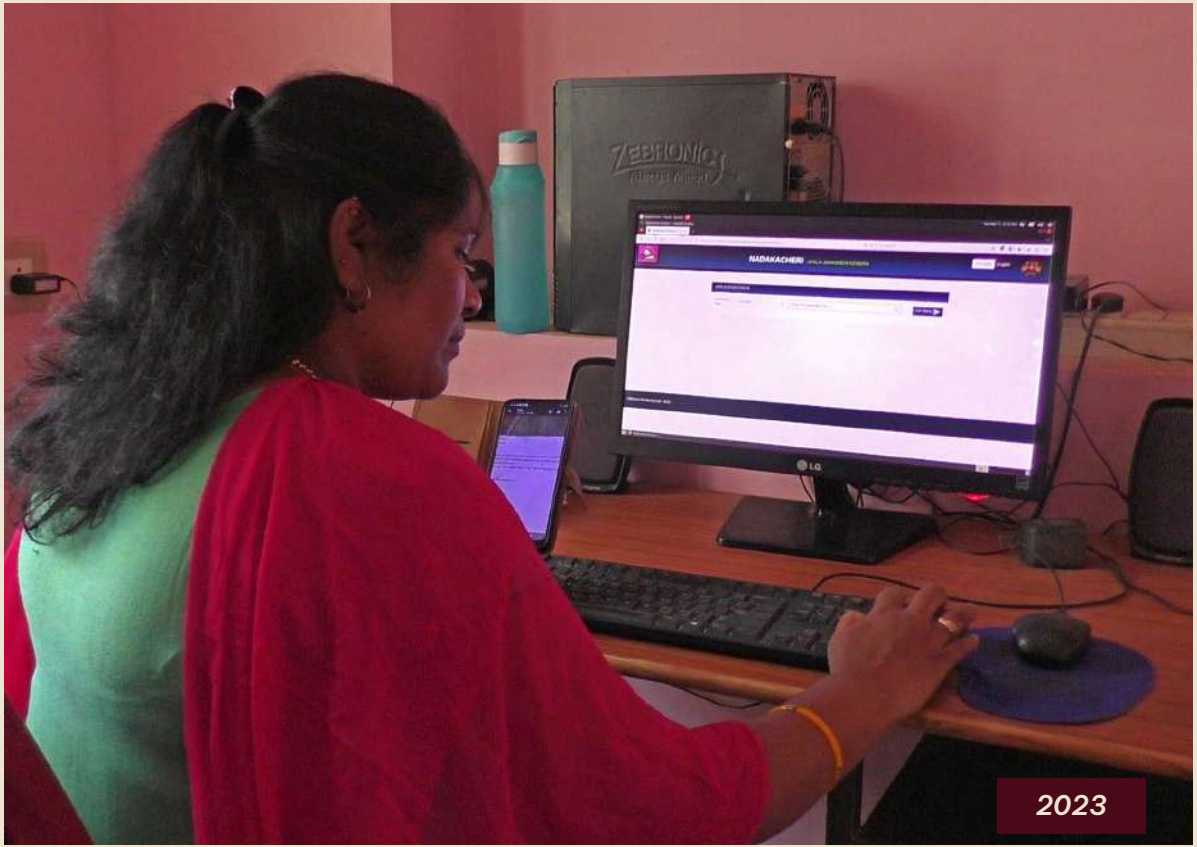

Digital Inclusion

Sushila, the Sakhi of the women-led information centre in HD Kote taluk, browses government department websites to gather information on the latest welfare schemes and track application statuses. Women approach Sushila to check the progress of their applications, and she provides updates without any fee or charge. Equipped with internet and computers, the centre enables real-time access to critical information for communities.

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Celebrating Community

Members of women's collectives at Adahalli look at photos displayed as part of an exhibition that featured various programs conducted by Prakriye for adolescent girls and women in rural areas. The women are seen identifying their relatives and acquaintances from nearby villages in the photos.

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Girls Showcase Talent

A member of the Jakkalli village community gazes at a photo in the exhibition displayed at a public building in the village center. The exhibition was organized following a camera training module for adolescent girls, showcasing the new skills they acquired. This was an opportunity for villagers to appreciate the talent of the adolescents who participated in the training.

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Mobility as Empowerment

Sakhi Vinoda rides her bike in Tumbasoge, HD Kote. Owning a bike enabled her to reach remote villages quickly, ensuring timely dissemination of information about government services. Her mobility inspired other members of women's collectives to learn to ride.

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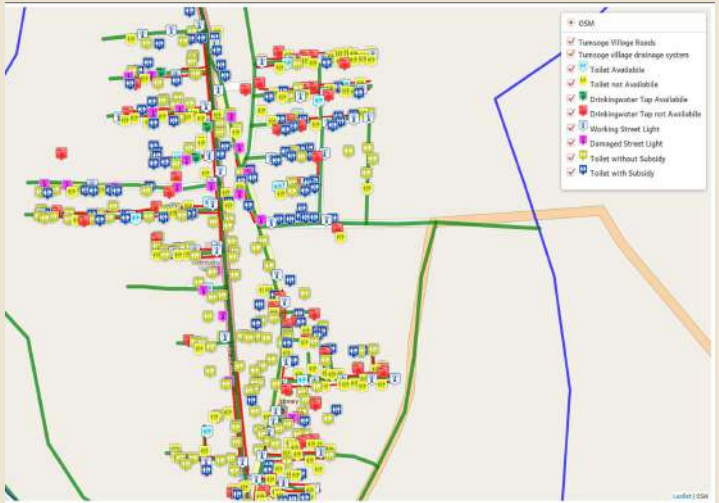

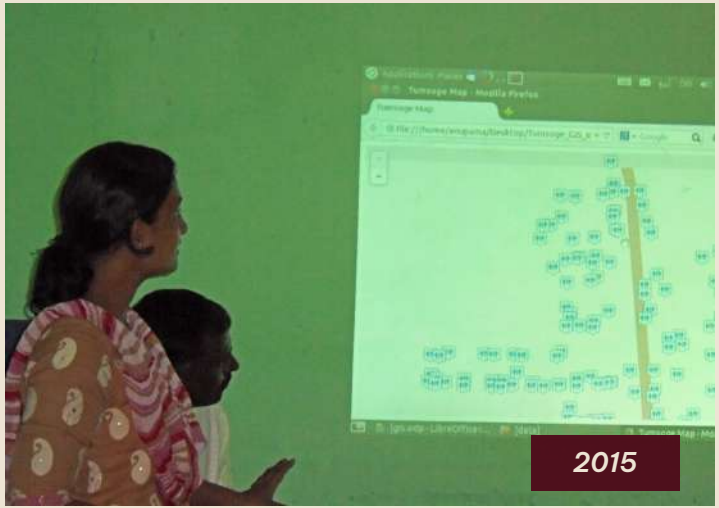

Identifying Civic Infrastructure

Prakriye staff conducts Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping of civic infrastructure in Tumbasoge village, HD Kote, documenting roads, drainage systems, toilets, drinking water taps, and street lights. The data, presented to the Panchayat Development Officer (PDO) and panchayat members, transformed planning by exposing infrastructure gaps. With ward-specific information, the PDO identified pending toilet constructions and pinpointed the reasons for delays.

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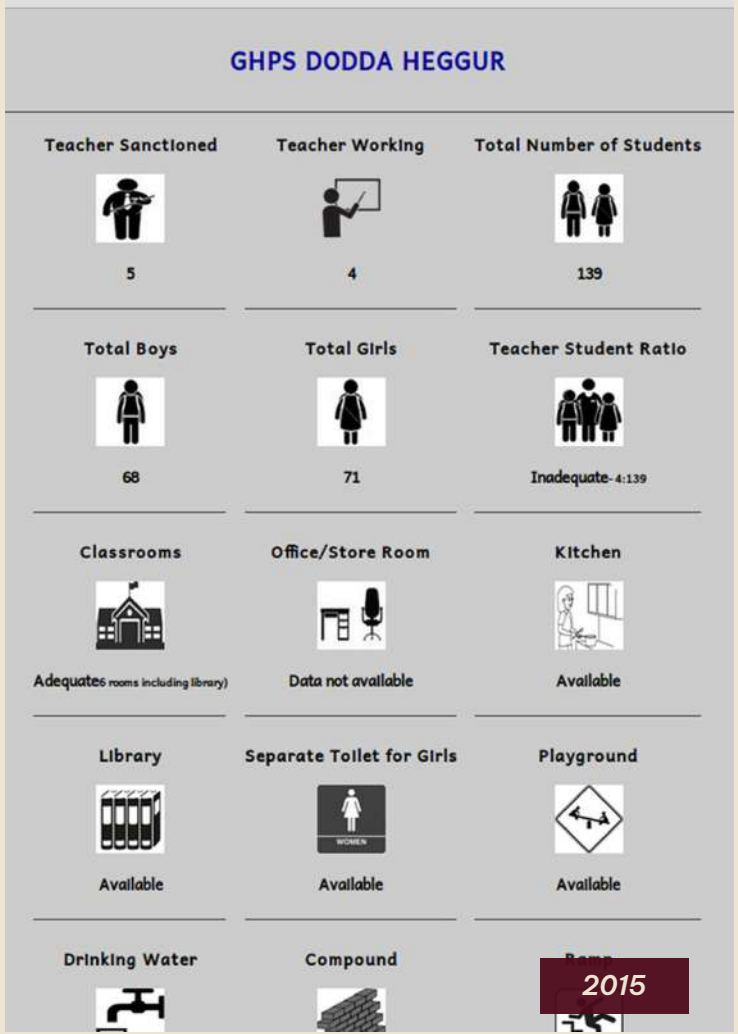

Identifying School Facilities

A GIS map of school facilities in Doddahejjur cluster, Hunsur, was presented to panchayat members and the government school Headmaster. The data gathered for this map helps identify an absence of female teachers in the local government school. Adolescent girls expressed their need for female teachers they could confide in about personal health concerns. After the issue was raised, an application was sent from the school to the Block Education Officer. The next year, three female teachers were appointed to the school.

Prakriye staff is seen explaining about street light infrastructure to panchayat officials, while presenting the GIS map to them.

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Behind the Broadcast

Leaders from women's collectives of Hunsur and HD Kote blocks visit Jnanavani Radio Station in Mysuru, from where 'Kelu Sakhi', Prakriye's community radio program was broadcast.

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Enjoying the Melody

Honnamma, a leader of a women's collective from Jaabagere, Hunsur, listens to a playback of the song she sang for 'Kelu Sakhi' at the women-led community information centre, Hunsur.

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Listen, My Friend!

Members of women's collectives gather in Hosavaranchi to tune in to 'Kelu Sakhi', a community radio program broadcast on Jnanavani FM every Monday at 9 pm. The program featured success stories of women from the collectives, relevant information, and folk songs—creating a shared space for learning and celebration.

Kelu Sakhi ran from 2006 to 2014.

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Banking for Women

Members of women's collectives in Aakala, Nanjangud, watch 'Bank and the Sangha', a video detailing bank procedures and the connection between women's collectives and financial institutions. Featuring real stories of economic empowerment through collective savings and bank loans, the video dismantled barriers for women who had never entered a bank. It became one of Prakriye's most-screened videos.

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A Case for Community Information Centres

Members of women's collectives gather in Handanahalli, Hunsur to watch a film on the significance and impact of women-led community information centres. After watching the film, the women expressed the need for such a centre in their village too, as they had to frequently travel to Mysuru for any information on government services.

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Scorecard for Equality

Members of women's collectives take part in a scorecard activity in Tumbasoge village, HD Kote, as part of a gender sensitisation module. The activity covered questions on gender-based roles, asking women to reflect on decision-making and public participation. Some of the questions included "Who benefits most from the Panchayat's services?", "Whose name is on a family's ration card?", "In whose name is a house registered?". Yellow cards indicated women, pink cards for men, and blue indicated both. Yellow cards are prominently seen in this photograph, as the activity was conducted six months into the introduction of the gender sensitisation training. In contrast, no yellow cards were raised when a similar activity was conducted at the beginning of the training. Through the program, the women gained confidence to approach Panchayats for seeking information.

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Power of Participation

Devamani, a resident of Tumbasoge, HD Kote, secured funds for house construction after participating in the Mahila Gramasabha, facilitated by Prakriye. Previously, her repeated visits to the Panchayat office yielded nothing—middlemen blocked access, demanding bribes to process her application.

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Reaching the Excluded

Prakriye staff and Sakhis, in coordination with Anganwadi workers, identify beneficiaries for grocery distribution during Covid-19, in the presence of village leaders. The ration distribution, facilitated by Prakriye, targeted vulnerable single women, widows, and senior citizens. When local leaders distributed rations during the pandemic, the most marginalized remained excluded due to a lack of information—a gap the Sakhis filled.

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Boys in the Kitchen

Adolescent boys take part in ‘fireless cooking’, making snacks that don’t require them to use a stove. The activity, part of a gender sensitisation training, challenged the notion that cooking was exclusively women’s work. The impact was immediate: on a subsequent school trip, boys offered to help their teachers with cooking and chopping vegetables while the girls gave them cooking instructions!

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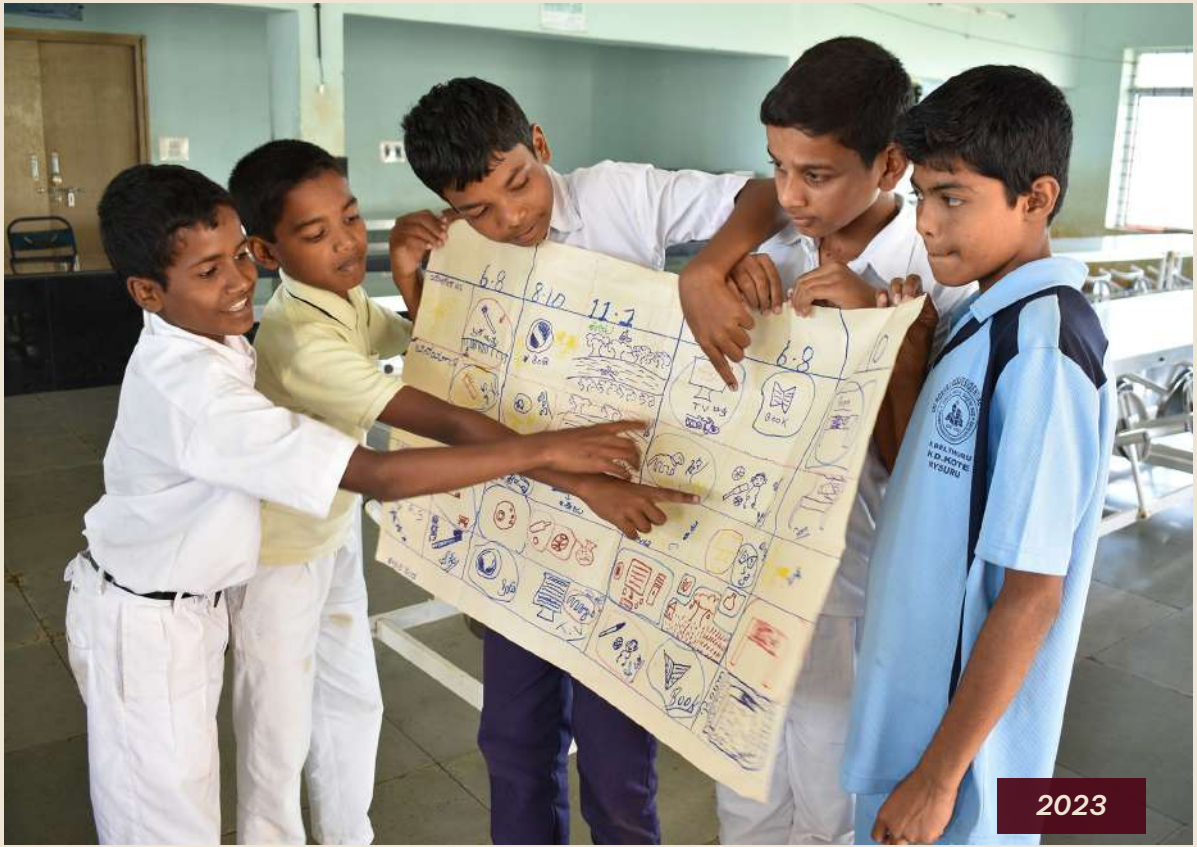

Work and Vacation

Students in Morarji Desai Residential School, Kalihundi, HD Kote, receive adolescence awareness training. This exercise was about mapping their daily activities at home during holidays, beginning from the time they wake up to when they sleep at night. The boys also later discussed activities they disliked, such as being asked to work in the fields during holidays.

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Women Power!

Representatives of 12 women's collectives gather to inaugurate the women-led Community Information Centre (Namma Mahiti Kendra) in Hagaranalli, Hunsur, in the presence of village leaders and government officials. Inaugurated on International Women's Day, the centre stands as a testament to the women's determination as they navigated layers of patriarchy and negotiated with male leaders to transform their vision into reality.

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Claiming the Dais for Equality

Women from Undavadi village sing on stage at 'Samanathe Jathre' (Fest for Equality). The women took pride in performing on a public platform—for many, their first time. Modelled on a village fair to symbolize celebration, the fest was designed as an exclusive space for women to rejoice and share their journeys of being part of the collective and the program.

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Hip, Hip, Hurray!

On Women's Day, women in Mane village, Sargur, participate in tug of war. Earlier that day, the women watched videos and explored the origins of Women's Day. Every year, women eagerly anticipate this day—a rare break from daily chores to play, celebrate, and simply enjoy themselves.

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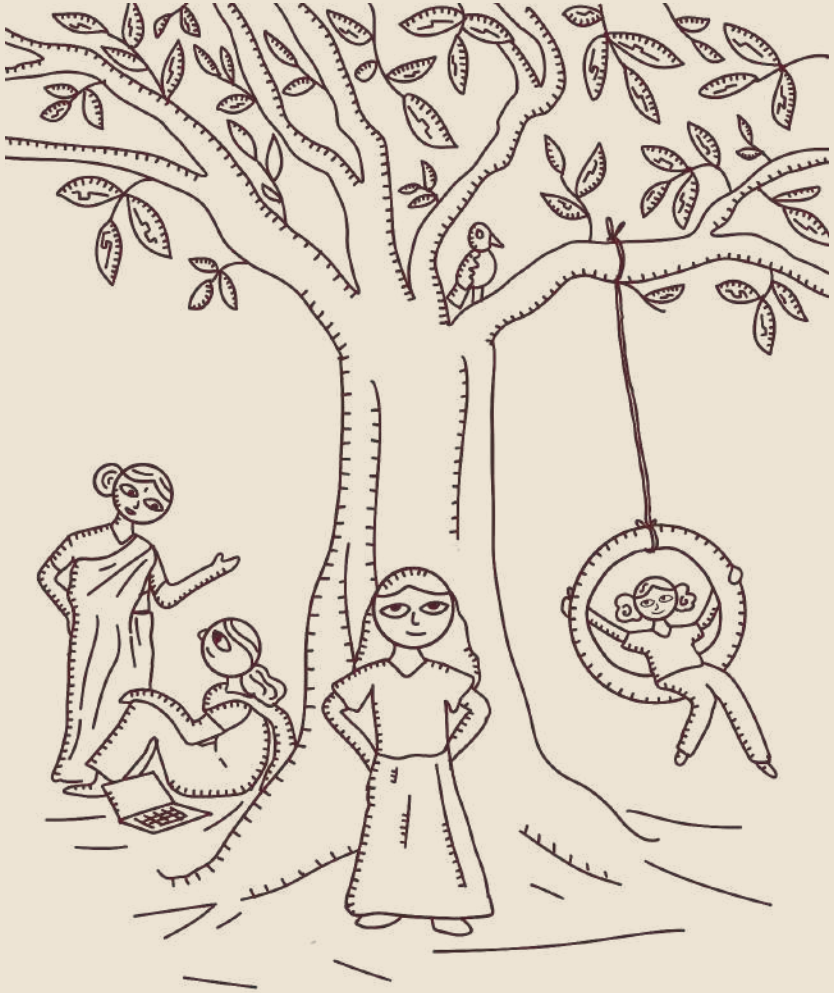

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Hosa Hejje Hosa Dishe: A New Step in a New Direction

Launched in 2019, the 'Hosa Hejje Hosa Dishe' project builds supportive ecosystems of empowerment for adolescent girls within Karnataka's government and government-aided schools. Working with teachers, the project focuses on enhancing awareness about rights and adolescence, building girls' articulation, and nurturing their aspirations for an adulthood with greater agency. Adolescent girls face compounded challenges—patriarchal constraints that limit their expression, combined with unsupervised navigation of social media platforms where they're exposed to toxic narratives about gender and bodies without the critical tools to challenge them.

From three pilot schools in Bengaluru, the project has expanded to nine districts across Karnataka—Bengaluru, Mysuru, Kalaburagi, Raichuru, Chamarajanagara, Mandya, Tumkuru, Chikmagaluru, and Hassan—reaching over 18,000 girls through Kishori Clubs. Kishori Clubs are teacher-facilitated safe spaces within schools where girls develop critical thinking alongside digital skills. Kishori Adda, an Instagram platform in Kannada, created as a feminist counter-narrative to online sexism and misogyny, centering adolescent girls' voices in public conversations.

Follow @kishoriadda on Instagram for more.

Pitch Perfect

The Principal of Gangamma Hombegowda Girls High School listens intently to the introductory pitch of 'Hosa Hejje Hosa Dishe' before the project launches in the school. The project aims to empower adolescent girls through digital innovation. It was introduced in 2019 in the context of an alarming increase in school dropout rates and child marriage cases in Karnataka. It aims to tackle the systemic gaps between parents and teachers in addressing the needs of adolescence.

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Survey for Progress

Baseline survey in progress for the 'Hosa Hejje Hosa Dishe' program. It takes stock of the socio-demographic details of students and assesses their knowledge, attitudes, behaviour, and perception of issues faced by adolescents.

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Snakes and Ladders

Adolescent girls take part in a ‘Snakes and ladders’ activity. Snakes indicate threats faced by the girls, and ladders are opportunities they must seize. The exercise helped them understand the systemic inequalities, build awareness about the self and the society, while empowering them to better navigate their adolescence. This activity was conducted as a scoping exercise to gather data and insights about adolescents’ lives and attitudes.

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A Star is Born

A student performs at the School Talents' Day, overcoming her stage fright. The 'Hosa Hejje Hosa Dishe' curriculum, with its diverse activities, equipped her with the confidence to take the stage.

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Co-creating Curriculum

Students at Karnataka Public School, Basavanagudi, Bengaluru, participate in a group activity following an immersive course on adolescent empowerment, reflecting on what resonated most with them about the curriculum.

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Finding their Voice

School students in Bengaluru explore audio recording. The audio recording skills help them articulate their aspirations and thoughts with greater clarity and confidence.

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Challenging Period Taboos

Members of women's collectives in rural Mysuru observe a menstrual cup demonstration to promote menstrual hygiene at 'Samanathe Jathre' (Fest for Equality). Several women appreciated its cost-effectiveness and expressed interest in purchasing it for their daughters.

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2024

Breaking Beauty Stereotypes

Girls watch an advertisement to understand beauty and body stereotypes, as part of a module titled ‘Identity and self-image’. They analyse the impact of body image issues on identity and self-esteem. Following the video screening, they participate in an activity where they compliment each other on physical attributes beyond stereotypical beauty standards.

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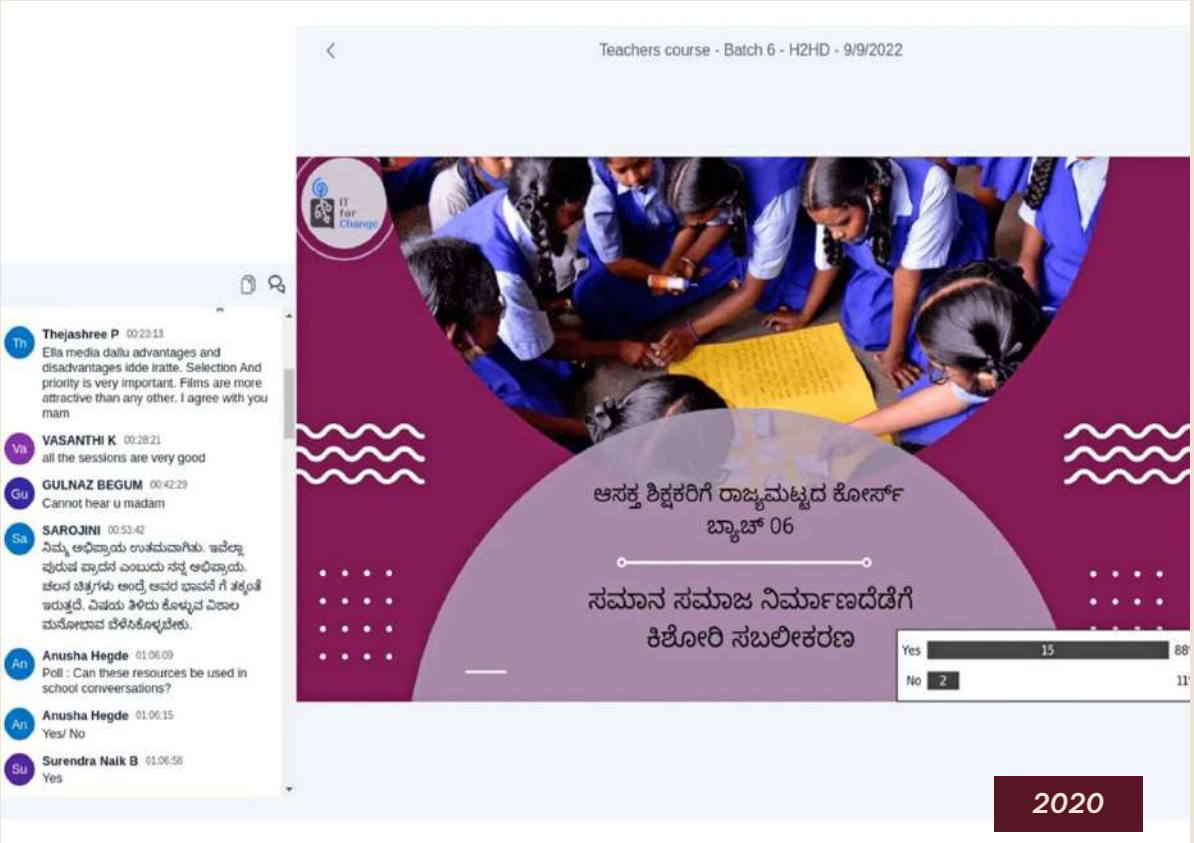

2020

Teachers as Learners

Teachers from government schools across Karnataka participate in a virtual course on adolescent empowerment during Covid-19, conducted in coordination with the Department of School Education and Literacy. It was an opportunity for teachers with limited technological skills to overcome their inhibitions, gather online, and discuss topics ranging from patriarchy to life skills.

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2024

Scaling Through Systems

The head of the District Institution of Education and Training (DIET) Mysuru, urges heads of various government schools to proactively facilitate Kishori Clubs, underscoring the importance of teacher-led adolescent empowerment. This institutional endorsement validates the relevance and impact of the 'Hosa Hejje Hosa Dishe' program.

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Empowering Educators

Kishori Club facilitator workshops equip teachers with strategies to create and sustain Kishori Clubs in their schools. Kishori Clubs are in-school, teacher-facilitated safe spaces for adolescent girls where issues pertaining to adolescence, such as body image and identity, gender equality, cyber safety, life skills, and career guidance, are discussed via digital content and peer-mediated discussions.

Government school teachers in Mysuru are seen analysing the Kishori Club strategy, mapping the strengths of the program, and areas for improvement.

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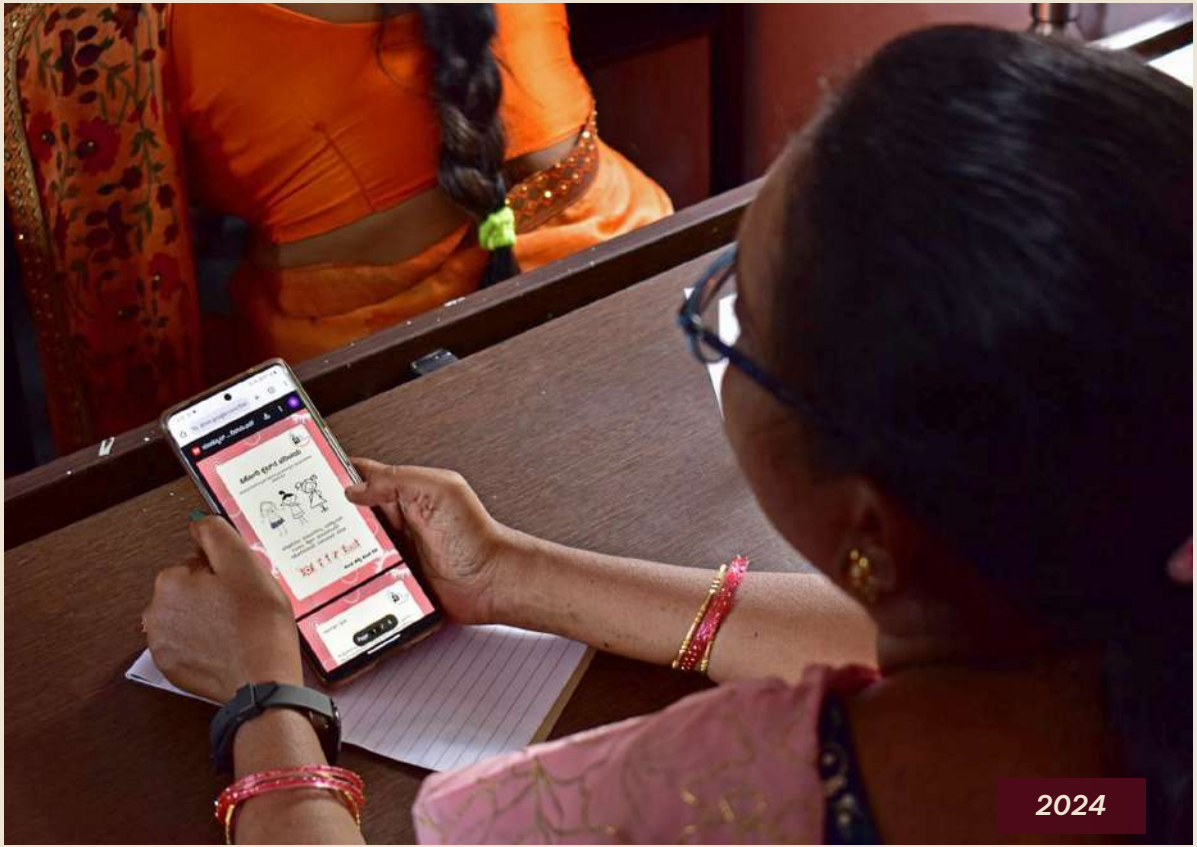

Resources for Facilitation

Teachers view a digital help sheet on the Karnataka Open Educational Resource Portal (KOER) to facilitate Kishori Clubs. The digital help sheets structure dialogue and spark discussion in Kishori Clubs, while video content enables teachers to address taboo topics with confidence.

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Champions of Adolescent Girls' Empowerment

As many as 120 Kishori Club facilitators across government schools in Kalaburagi attend the workshop – a testament to both the need and the success of the Kishori Club program.

IT for Change

2024

Three Cheers for Empowerment

Students in government high schools across Mysuru enthusiastically participate in Kishori Clubs. In Doddahundi, the class engages in critical discussions after watching video clips from movies, TV serials, and advertisements, reflecting on how media market forces reinforce patriarchy. At Gerasanahalli, the girls raise their hands in cheer for adolescent empowerment.

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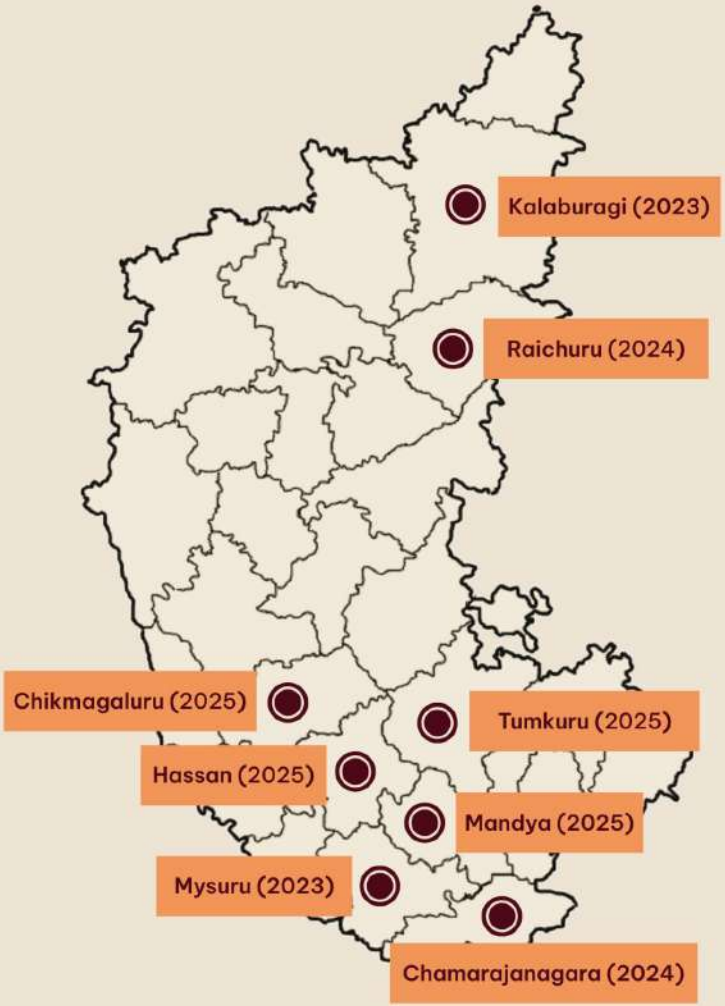

Kishori Clubs in Karnataka

A map of Kishori Clubs established across the state since 2023. The program creates teacher-led and technology-mediated safe spaces for adolescent girls in government schools with limited infrastructure, reaching students from the most marginalized communities.

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Peek into Kishori Adda

Instagram grid of Kishori Adda showcases the various themes covered under the project. Kishori Adda is an Instagram account for adolescent empowerment that serves as a counter-narrative platform to challenge toxic mainstream content. The content features creative dialogues and strategic campaigns on equality, overcoming patriarchy, breaking stereotypes, and understanding cyberspace.

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