

CHRONICLES

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER || Oct - Dec 2023

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Dear Readers,

Wishing everyone a joyful start to the New Year!

We are delighted to present our quarterly newsletter, which goes beyond being a mere compilation of our activities. With your support, the newsletter serves as a window to share the transformation we are gradually achieving in the lives of individuals and communities we work with.

As we begin on a new journey, let's take a moment to reflect on the last three months of the calendar year and the efforts to create inclusive communities and empower them through our diverse initiatives.

Here's a brief overview of our key initiatives and flagship programs:



Rajesh Krishnan
CEO



Promoting water security by restoring abandoned waterbodies through public-private partnerships



Boosting the city's groundwater level by constructing 10,000 percolation wells for conserving and percolating 1 billion litres of rainwater annually



Making schools and communities as safe spaces by creating a cadre of teachers as 'GendHer' champions and a generation of gender-sensitive youngsters



A national-level campaign focusing on early education and care by strengthening Anganwadi Centres, aligning with the ICDS guidelines



An integrated rural development program towards creating self-sustainable rural communities focusing on quality education, health and sanitation, livelihood and sustainable environment

These initiatives, diverse in scale, location, and beneficiaries, are the result of collective action involving various stakeholders – our CSR partners, government departments, Gram Panchayats, and the communities we collaborate with. We invite you to join us as we expand our efforts to reach out to those most in need, including the marginalized and neglected. Together, we can make a meaningful impact and build a brighter future for all.

With Gratitude,
Rajesh Krishnan

Unveiling A New Campaign: 'AIKYAM', THE SAFE SPACE Initiative



The 2030 Agenda for the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) embody a powerful commitment to **"Leave No One Behind"** and ensure a life of dignity for all, including the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ +) community. Despite efforts to recognize and affirm the equal rights of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) individuals, social acceptance remains bleak.

United Way Bengaluru has taken a significant step forward with the launch of 'Aikyam,' a campaign to create a safe and inclusive space for the LGBTQ+ community. Derived from Sanskrit, 'Aikyam' translates to unity or oneness, encapsulating the initiative's core goal of creating a society where the LGBTQ+ community is treated without discrimination.

Some key findings that helped to shape the Aikyam campaign

- While **92%** of respondents were aware of government social welfare schemes, the utilization of these services remained significantly low.
- Social acceptance proved to be a significant hurdle, with a third of respondents reporting instances of violence and non-acceptance from family members.
- Mental health support emerged as a pressing need, with **86%** of respondents acknowledging using counselling services.
- Awareness and usage of legal services were even lower, with only **19%** being aware and **7%** utilizing these services. However, 97% expressed a willingness to avail of such services if provided through a dedicated facility.
- The community expressed a high demand for information and services related to sexually transmitted infections, often resorting to begging and sex work for livelihood.

The findings highlighted the requirement of a dedicated facility to address the community's needs, a space where they would feel comfortable sharing their feelings, and a platform that would facilitate basic needs to ensure a dignified living.

The '**Aikyam**' safe space campaign addresses these concerns by establishing a physical and social space resembling a resource centre. This initiative aims to:

- Provide the LGBTQ+ community a secure and welcoming environment where they can freely express themselves and showcase their talents without fear of judgment or discrimination.
- Offer access to fundamental rights, including health services and counselling for physical and mental well-being, along with various other services, either directly or through networks.
- Facilitate connections with peers and mainstream society, fostering acceptance and inclusivity.
- Provide information, awareness, and support for rights, entitlements, and identity.



64 members got access to the **Transgender Certificate & Identity Cards**



111 individuals utilized the **free counselling** services



678 members participated and benefitted from the **health camps**

We are delighted that our first safe space has been set up at Palace Guttahalli in Bengaluru in collaboration with CSR partner **Fortea**. More than **800** community members have visited the centre within the last few months since its establishment.

This centre serves as our government, providing a space for us to share challenges, discuss solutions, and feel confident.

- **Mandavi** (name changed),
A community member

Developing a cadre of skilled care providers at Anganwadi Centres



Anganwadi workers are pivotal in delivering **Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)** services at the grassroots level. Empowering them with ECCD-related skills significantly influences the quality of their interactions with children.

Recognizing the need to equip them with new-age teaching and learning techniques, United Way Bengaluru and CSR partner **Wells Fargo** focused on building the capacities of the Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) since last year. Anganwadi Workers were sensitized on essential skills, including brain development, growth monitoring, storytelling, classroom management, and model Anganwadi setup through various activities. **2490 AWWs** have been successfully trained thus far.

“

I attended a two-day preschool training program organized by United Way Bengaluru. Fourteen years ago, I underwent teacher training that covered early education. The recent workshop was a valuable upgrade, providing insights into the significance of the initial six years in a child's life and the crucial stages of brain development. The training emphasized the importance of equipping Anganwadi Centres with 24 essential elements, storytelling techniques using 'Navarasa,' making props from local materials, and engaging children in various activities.”

- **Manjula**

Anganwadi Worker from Sarakayalahalli AWC, Chikkaballapura District

A Week of Action for Education and Health



Under the Born Learning Campaign, an initiative on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), two significant observation days were celebrated - **International Girl Child Day on October 11** and **Global Handwashing Day on October 15, 2023**.

An awareness session for parents was organized in **four Anganwadi Centers in Raichur, Karnataka**, where the Born Learning Campaign is implemented. The session emphasized the importance of educating children, particularly girls, and addressed issues such as girl-child education and combating child marriage. Around **30 mothers and 53 young girls** attended this event.



On the same week, we also celebrated the **Global Handwashing Day**.

 **Jigani and Srirampura, Bengaluru**

Reach



40 Anganwadi
Centres



627
Children



152
Parents

During the event, a session was conducted to underscore the significance of handwashing. The proper steps were demonstrated, ensuring parents and children understand its importance.

GendHer Campaign's Vision for Inclusive and Safe School Spaces

The GendHer campaign, initiated last year, has gathered significant momentum and the recent quarter witnessed highly engaging sessions tailored for teachers from diverse government schools.

Feedback From Teachers'



"After this workshop, I am inclined to approach my class in a different manner. The emphasis will shift from instructing students on what they should not do to guiding them on what they should do."

"We have to take forward this workshop in our school. Sessions need to be delivered jointly to both boys and girls. Misconceptions related to the body and information and terminologies need to be clarified. At this age children are naturally curious and such awareness will help them to stay informed and take responsible decisions."



The campaign aims to empower teachers and students by providing them with **knowledge on sexual and reproductive health, gender sensitivity, and inclusion**. The goal is to transform schools into safe spaces equipped with support systems that enable the consistent application of the acquired knowledge.

Since its inception, over **400** teachers have undergone sensitization, and approximately **12,000** students have benefited from workshops organized by their teachers.

Reshaping Habits, Restoring Nature



From Dumping Ground to Restored Lake: Reviving Dommasandra

Dommasandra Lake in North Bengaluru, spanning about **38.6 acres**, was a crucial water source for the local community and wildlife. However, over the years, it suffered a severe decline due to waste and untreated sewage pollution. This led to health issues, foul odours, and a drop in groundwater levels, creating a major environmental problem.

In response, United Way Bengaluru, in partnership with CSR partner **Mphasis** and the Panchayat, initiated the '**Wake the Lake**' project to restore the lake. The process involved a two-month cleanup to remove tons of garbage, which was then sent to recycling facilities. The soil excavated from the lakebed was sorted, and the organic material was given to nearby farmers to improve their soil quality. The most crucial aspect was involving the community. The main element was engaging the community. Their active involvement in the process has instilled a sense of ownership in the initiative.

The restoration efforts bore fruit as Dommasandra Lake experienced a notable revival. **Aquatic life returned**, and the greenery around the lake flourished once again. Notably, there was a positive change in the community's behaviour. People who once carelessly disposed of waste in the water became more conscious, showing a newfound commitment to preserving the lake.

Did You Know?



- Karnataka has the highest proportion (79%) of drought-prone area among major states in India. Additionally, Karnataka has the second largest area of dry land in the country, surpassed only by Rajasthan.
- Karnataka faces a water crisis as all 14 major dams reach low levels, with only 56% water capacity remaining until the next June 2024 monsoon.

Beyond Engineering: Navigating the Social Challenges in Hullahalli Lake's Restoration



From Vision to Reality: How Community Collaboration Restored Hullahalli Lake to its Former Glory

The narrative of **Hullahalli Lake's** revival stands out from the ordinary. Situated in Hullahalli Village of Mantapa Gram Panchayat in Anekal Taluk, spanning 16 acres of water spread, the lake had lost its former glory, requiring attention. However, the challenge extended beyond its condition. A road within the lake, stretching for a distance of **130 metres**, posed a significant obstacle, as any rejuvenation attempt would entail demolishing part of the lake. However, there was persistent opposition from a group who argued that the road was the sole access route to a neighbouring agricultural land, although it was intended for development and personal interests.

So, how did **United Way Bengaluru** (UWBe) tackle this challenge? UWBe adopted a community-centric approach. Engaging in extensive discussions over four months with local stakeholders, including community members and the Gram Panchayat, UWBe pursued a resolution. However, an abrupt halt order was issued after removing only 20 feet. But the team still needed to do more. The matter reached the Taluk's Executive Officer through meetings with government officials and the village community. Eventually, the Panchayat committed to removing the road encroachment, resolving a longstanding challenge.

This story exemplifies the positive impact of organizations deeply engaging with local communities to navigate challenges collaboratively. This effort resulted in a substantial increase in water storage capacity by **13 crore litres**, now serving a **4500**-strong population for various needs, including domestic use, agriculture, livestock, and preserving natural habitats. Thanks to our CSR partner, **Continental** for their constant support throughout the process.

Chalkuntappa (Tatyappa), an 82-year-old dedicated community volunteer



Meet **Chalkuntappa (Tatyappa)**, an 82-year-old dedicated volunteer whom we met during one of our lake restoration projects at Channappanahalli in Kolar district of Karnataka. The rejuvenation was a collaborative effort of United Way Bengaluru and CSR Partner. Alongside lake restoration activities, one of the other efforts was to enhance the biodiversity around the lake. 1100 saplings were planted.

What happened next amazed us.

We found an elderly person voluntarily nurturing saplings after the project was completed. He ensured that the saplings were watered and weeds were removed. He also put up a bio fence. Notably, he took precautions to prevent soil erosion by planting grass in the inlets, creating a barrier to trap silt and protect the lake.

When asked about his motivation, Tatyappa shared a simple yet profound perspective:

"Every creature on Mother Earth needs water every day. Whether for drinking, growing crops, or domestic use, water is essential. Many farmers nowadays rely on groundwater, depleting this vital resource. It's our duty to conserve every drop."

Tatyappa's pure passion is a testament to individual commitment towards water security, reminding us of our collective responsibility in preserving our precious natural resources.

Some heroes do go unsung, and these unexpected moments are the ones that recharge our inspiration tanks.

VAPUSHI: The Livelihood Initiative for Cultivating Entrepreneurship

'Vapushi' emerged as a brand from the livelihood intervention of United Way Bengaluru's (UWBe) 'Rural Rising' program. With a dedicated focus on empowering self-help groups (SHGs) and women from within local communities, UWBe continuously identifies and supports potential groups and individuals, taps her skills, nurtures them with essential training and helps them start an entrepreneurial journey.

Many SHGs have already set up bag-making, candle-making, and snack-making units. The emphasis is not just on production but empowering these units to design, create, and effectively market their products.



The products crafted by these units are gradually reaching various markets. But beyond the financial achievements, the true success of the initiative lies in sowing the seeds of entrepreneurship among local women who may not have dared to explore such opportunities before.

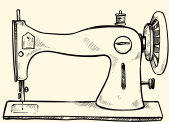
"Each time a woman stands up for herself, she stands up for all women."

-Maya Angelou

Skills and Community Resource Centre with Digital Library

We are thrilled to announce the establishment of a Skilling Center and a Community Resource Center (CRC) with a digital library in Mittermari Gram Panchayat, Bagepalli. This initiative is a collaboration of United Way Bengaluru and CSR partner **Flowserve**. It is in partnership with the government of Karnataka under the "**Sanjeevani**" scheme under the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM).

The primary objective of this initiative is to narrow the community's learning gap by revitalizing the CRC into a dynamic space for individual and collective growth. This upgraded CRC now functions as a digital library with a full-time librarian appointed by the Panchayat. It also offers reading sessions, workshops, and access to e-books and online services. The Skilling Centre offers vocational training such as tailoring and beautician courses.



50 women trained in tailoring at the **skill centre**



15 women currently undergoing **beautician courses**



30-50 people using the **library** on a daily basis



50 community members have enrolled in **digital literacy session**

From Challenges to Opportunities

Individuals with physical disabilities often find themselves marginalized, facing challenges in accessing decent employment opportunities that directly impact their socio-economic status, mainly if they reside in remote areas.

Under the Rural Rising flagship program, in collaboration with United Way Baroda, we reached out to **140 youths** aged **18 to 35** who had completed at least their **12th-grade** or undergraduate studies. These youths were then mobilized and provided training in computer skills, certified by the **Skill India and Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME)** departments.

The training program lasted three months, with additional hours dedicated to providing extra support and mentoring, including weekends, as many participants required personalized assistance. Alongside technical skills, the students received training in soft skills such as personality development and grooming, helping them overcome apprehensions. On-the-job training was also incorporated to provide them with practical experience and employment readiness.

Thanks to this comprehensive training program, these students have experienced a significant boost in self-confidence. They now feel fulfilled in supporting their families financially and have seen an improvement in their social lives.





Volunteers Spark Community Impact



United Way Bengaluru, in collaboration with its CSR partner **3M**, organized a community engagement initiative that brought together more than 42 volunteers in simultaneous activities in different locations across Bengaluru.

Held on December 15, 2023, one group of volunteers visited the '**Hope**' Orphanage, where volunteers dedicated their time to creating a warm and nurturing environment for the children, engaging them in a DIY science kit activity. Another group of volunteers visited the **CARE Animal Shelter**, where they tended to the animals, from cleaning to feeding them. Meanwhile, at a **government school**, volunteers participated in a mural art activity, contributing to the school's inclusivity and creating a more vibrant learning space that encourages creativity among the students.

TLM Initiative for Children's Enriched Learning



As part of the Ernst & Young GDS Connectival volunteering initiative, a special session for corporate volunteers took place at the EY office, focusing on preparing **Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs)**. Facilitated by experts, the TLMs were designed to cater to the needs of children with autism. Over **327 volunteers** from three different locations of Bengaluru participated. The TLMs helped to engage **89 children** by ensuring an enriching visual and sensory experience.

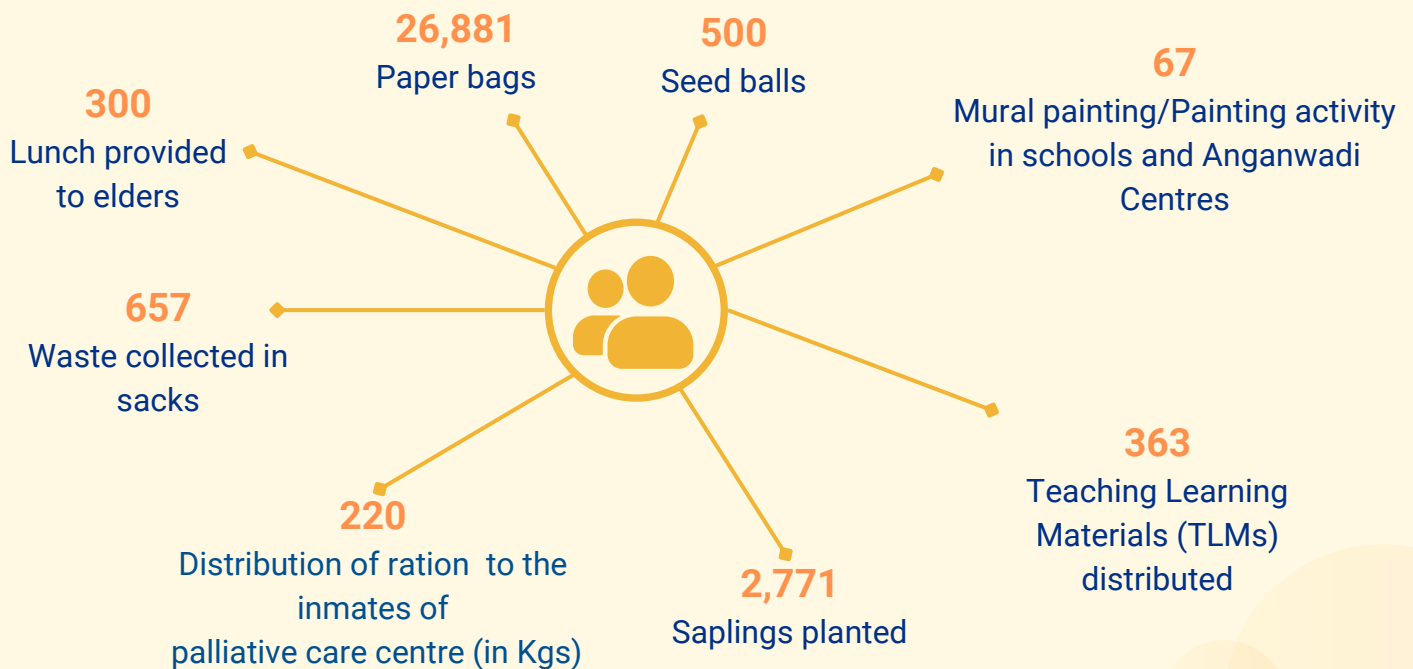
Volunteering & ESG: How do we join the dots?



4551
Volunteers



238 Hours
(Average
3hrs/Volunteer)



Volunteers from Corporate Partners (Oct-Dec'23)

3M
AMD
ANZ
Continental
CSGI
Deloitte
Delta
GEBE
Empower
EY

Flowserve
Mediatek
Synopsis
Wells Fargo
Western Digital
Zebra
Zoom





UWBe Champion



Sagar Mirji
Asst. Manager, Procurements

Having been an integral part of United Way Bengaluru for the past four and a half years, Sagar has significantly contributed to the organization. His role in the procurement team involves working with different teams and with external vendors, navigating and completing numerous third-party audits. Sagar is a silent achiever and meticulously meets his responsibilities in adherence to details, accuracy, standard operating processes and policies. He demonstrates high ethical standards in his dealings.

One of Sagar's notable qualities is his proactive approach to work. Once assigned a task, he diligently sees it through to completion without needing reminders or follow-ups. His willingness to take on any task without hesitation reflects a can-do attitude that significantly contributes to the smooth functioning of operations.

Sagar has a calm demeanour, but on the other hand, he is a lively person who enjoys socializing with friends on weekends and exploring new places. Not known to many, Sagar possesses a spiritual side, finding solace in devotional music and lectures.

Diwali Celebration that Sparkled with Team Spirit

The festival of lights illuminated the spirit of our remarkable team through a grand celebration at our office in Bengaluru and field offices. Adorned in vibrant colours, with smiles abound, it wasn't merely a celebration but a moment that brought the team together. The festivities included dinner, games, and quizzes, and the energy contributed by each member added an extra sparkle to the Diwali celebration.



A Decade and a Half of Impact

United Way Bengaluru (UWBe) achieved a momentous milestone this year, marking 15 years of impactful service. On October 5, 2023, we commemorated this significant journey with a special event, 'REFLECTIONS,' joined by our dedicated team members, valued stakeholders, and esteemed board members.

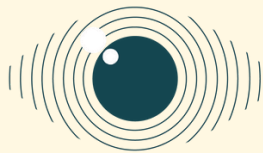
The event featured keynote speeches, a panel discussion on 'Bold CSR,' and recognitions for our long-standing partners. We proudly unveiled our 15-year journey book, symbolizing our collective achievements and growth.

In addition to reflection, the event marked the launch of two flagship programs - 'Aikyam' focusing on creating safe spaces and 'E-O2: Let the Earth Breathe,' underlining our commitment to the essential pillars of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG). Simultaneously, we initiated the Born Learning Campaign playbook, furthering our dedication to early childhood education.



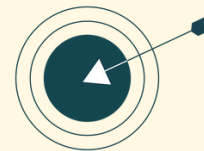
United Way Bengaluru (UWBe) is a part of United Way Worldwide, the largest NGO network of over 1,100 chapters in 37 countries. Since 2008, UWBe has been dedicatedly working in underserved locations and marginalized communities. UWBe marked a significant milestone this year as it completed its 15-year journey. Over 15 years, the organization's reach extended beyond Karnataka to eight other states, with a special focus on remote areas and aspirational districts. United Way Bengaluru works in a few key areas: Education, Health, Rural Development and Environment. Aligned with its mission, the organization brings together unified efforts from CSR partners, civic bodies and local communities to work collaboratively towards solutions. The organization carries a global image with a 'local heart' committed to creating meaningful change in the lives of the local communities.

VISION



United Way envisions a world where all individuals and families achieve their human potential through education, income stability, and healthy lives.

MISSION



United Way seeks to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities around the world to advance the common good.

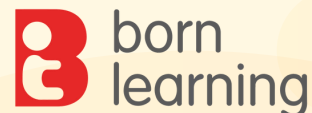
Our Flagship Campaigns



RURAL
RISING



ONE BILLION DROPS
Sustainability Through Water Security



We are
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Recognized by Great Place To Work® India

United Way of Bengaluru

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Jeevan Bima Nagar Main Road, HAL 3rd Stage,
DOS Colony, Jeevan Bima Nagar,
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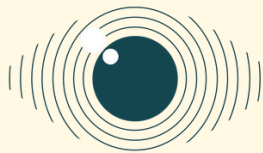
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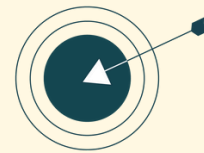
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Our Flagship Campaigns



RURAL
RISING



GENDHER

ONE BILLI'N DR'PS
Sustainability Through Water Security



born
learning



We are

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