



MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT



NOVEMBER 2016

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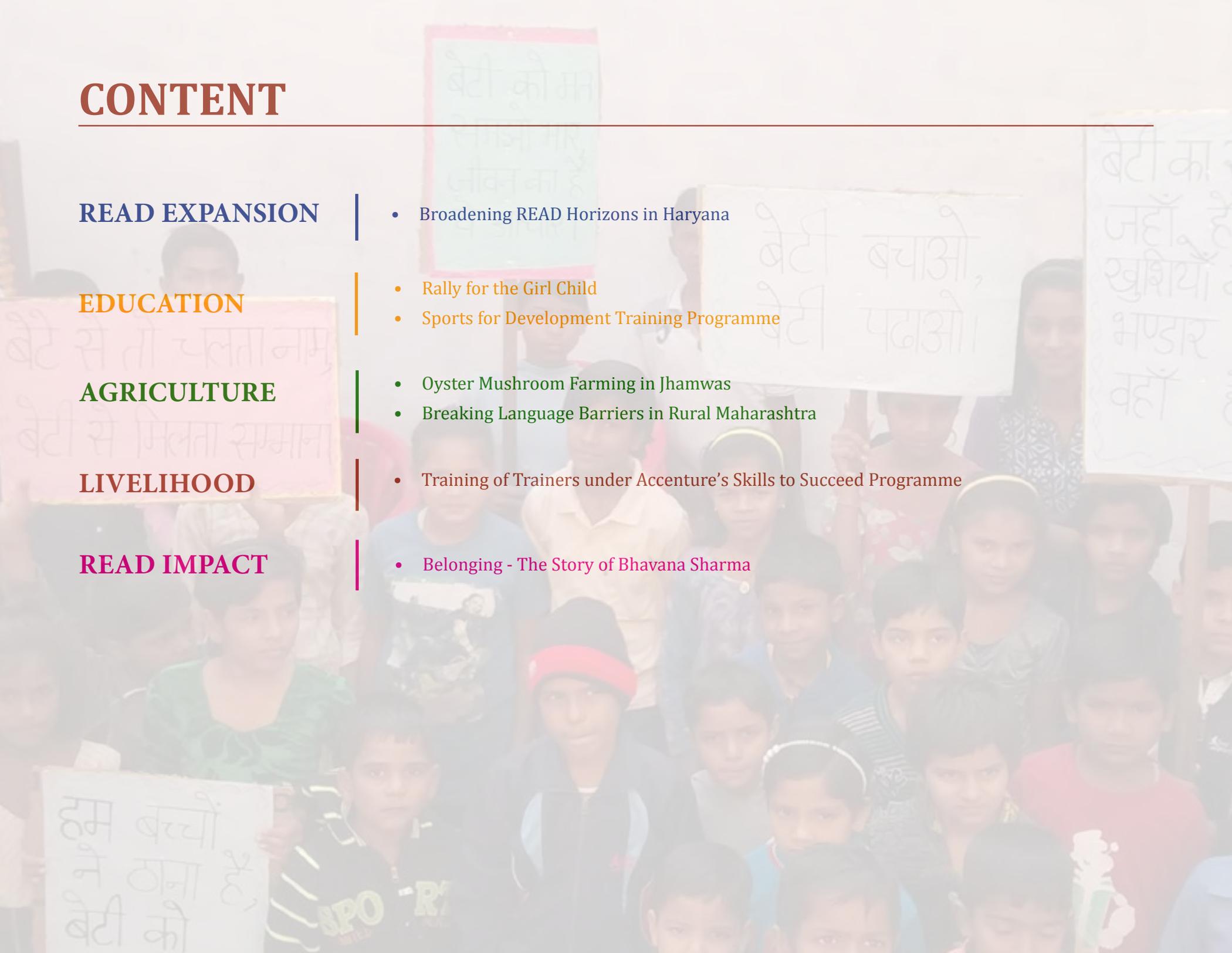
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READ EXPANSION

Broadening READ Horizons in Haryana

On the 15th and 16th of November, 2016, READ India met with school teachers from four schools in the villages of Jhamwas, Nihargarh, Dhingerheri and Sheikpura respectively. The purpose of the visit was to survey the potential for trainings in these villages, and slowly introduce them if the plan was found to be viable and agreeable to the community.

The READ team visited schools in Nihalgargh and Jhamwas on the 15th of November, where they conducted a Life Skills Session



on health and hygiene. Participants were divided into groups and provided with chart paper and stationery. They were asked to draw or write about a topic, to be chosen from the following:

- 1) How to keep ourselves and our surroundings clean
- 2) Steps to wash our hands and why washing hands is important
- 3) What food we should eat to keep ourselves healthy

The students chose their topics and while some wrote the steps for washing hands properly, other groups drew the foods that are nutritious and healthy, including leafy green vegetables, fruits, paneer, ghee and other dairy products, lean meats and nuts and so on.

One group had filled their chart with daily habits to stay hygienic, including actions such as grooming ourselves daily, using dustbins to throw away garbage, ensuring our surroundings are neat and clean and so on.

The charts were placed around the classroom as a reminder to the children, as they promised to follow the points that they had written to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The students were there asked to write 5 healthy habits which they would try to follow for the next one month. In the next session, we will discuss this activity with them and ask them “Is it difficult to adopt healthy habits?”

Finally, the students were shown a short video on Health and Hygiene. At the end of the session, and to celebrate Children’s day which fell on the 14th of November, we quizzed the students

Name of Village	No. of Households
Nihalgarh	37
Jhamwas	55
Dhingerheri	12
Sheikpura	25
TOTAL	229

with some general questions, and distributed them with a set of stationery items. The participants for the sessions consisted of 37 students of Class 3 and 4 from the Nihalgarh School, and 55 students of Classes 1 to 5 from the Jhamwas School, respectively.

On the 16th of November, the READ team visited schools in Sheikpura and Dhingerheri. With the help of staff from the Centre, we mobilized the community and spoke with 44 households, which consists of 220 individuals.

We found that most so-called 'high-caste' people were indifferent towards the Centre's programmes, but those of the 'lower-caste' displayed interest for the sewing and stitching classes.

Later, the team held sessions at a government school in Dhingerheri, in which 112 students in Classes 1 to 7 were present. An activity on handwashing and self-care was taken by Ms. Ruchika Dhingra.

The students were also given a Life Skills session on the importance of good health and hygiene, and their queries were answered by the trainer. When asked whether they frequented the Center in

their village, it was found that out of the 112 present, 105 of the students used the Center's resources on a regular basis.

Finally, the team held a Life Skills session with the students of the Sheikpura School. The school has a total of only 25 students, with 5 to 6 students each in Classes 1 to 5. But the students' caliber was impressive, as the team found that their knowledge and ability was advanced slightly beyond their expected levels. The students' were already reading beyond their average level, and attempting problems meant for higher classes than theirs.

Despite how well-kept the school was, the principal was alone in his crusade to provide better education to the children in the village, and thus requested help from READ India for certain amenities. The team agreed to look into the needs of the school and act accordingly.



EDUCATION

Rally for the Girl Child

Gender discrimination still prevails in many rural and even urban areas, where young girls are at risk of neglect at the hands of their families and society. Being withheld from education is just one way that girls lose out, even in these modern days. On the 20th of November, 42 young students from the local government school and community in Sonapat conducted a rally for education, supporting the concept of Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child).

Accompanied by the READ team from the Sonapat Centre, the students held placards, posters and slogans and moved through the community, to mobilize them on educating and on valuing the



girl child. Quite a few people from the community joined the rally as they returned to the Centre, and an impromptu meeting was held, to discuss how these issues were negatively affecting the community as a whole. Together, they decided on what actions to take and their agenda for the coming month, to help ensure education to all, equally.

Sports for Development Training Programme

Earlier in September, READ India had initiated a Sports for Development Training Programme in the Jan Seva Gyan Kendra Center in Chhainsa, Haryana. Plans were underway at the Amazon Cares Community Outreach Center in Tauru to introduce the



same programme in the community, with Community Youth Leaders being chosen from the neighbouring villages of Jhamwas, Dingerheri, Gudda, Sheikhpura and Nihalgargh. Eight such leaders have been chosen, composed of seven men and one woman.

The Community Youth Leaders will teach young students various games and sports activities and encourage them to participate voluntarily, which will help each child develop holistically and also nurture their interest in sports as a healthy lifestyle choice, a social activity or a future career.

This November, the chosen leaders underwent a six-day training programme which took place in the Amazon READ Center in Tauru. During the training, they were shown the curriculum and training schedule that they would be expected to follow, when teaching young children.

The training schedule provided to them consists of an initial ice breaking session where the children would get to know each other as well as the Community Youth Leader. This would be followed by any type of sporting activity and another activity which would hook the children into the game.

Thereafter, the participants would be introduced to the Main Game

and given instructions. The schedule follows on with a metaphor, a Sit-Breath-Think session, and a final session to discuss the take away from the training.

More than simply teaching them a sport, however, the curriculum also covers four domain areas per day:

1. Education
2. Health
3. Gender
4. Right to play

The participants were also given instruction in First Aid, to be prepared for any situations. The CYLs are expected to take a ground session every week with children aged 7 to 14 years.

These ground sessions place emphasis on a safe environment, joyful learning, maximum participation and experiential learning with a knowledgeable mentor.



AGRICULTURE

Oyster Mushroom Farming in Jhamwas

At the Amazon Cares Community Outreach Center in Tauru, Haryana, training and instruction in Oyster Mushroom cultivation was provided to the Mr. Virender Singh who was also chosen to be one of the Model Farmers. The final enclosure of the mushrooms was also established at the farmer's site.

Mr. Shakti Singh, our Agricultural Expert, assisted the team in monitoring the site where the production of the mushrooms would be expected to take place, and helped us make the necessary arrangements for cultivation.

Several processes were completed during this time. This requires raw material upon which the oyster mushrooms will be cultivated. The READ Center had decided to use wheat as the raw material as it is easily acquired, available in abundance, and quite simple to use.

After acquiring adequate amounts of the wheat straw, the material was separated and sterilized. Thereafter, the model farmers prepared the large bags in which the mushrooms would be cultivated, by filling them each with the straw material.

The bags were each filled to weigh an average of 20 kg, and a total of 28 bags were packed with the straw, thus completing the base for the cultivation.

The harvest period is between 25 to 50 days, and it is expected that the farmers will be able to make approximately 3 harvests per bag,

after which they would have to restart the process.

With the help of Mr. Shakti Singh, who has 24 years of experience in the agricultural field, we expect the mushroom cultivation to go well and for the farmers to earn the benefits of this profitable venture soon enough.

Breaking Language Barriers in Rural Maharashtra

The Kissan Sanchar Kendra aims to help the small Indian farmers who struggle to find a footing in a competitive and unpredictable world. The organization provides agricultural services which help the farmer to prepare themselves. This includes short reports to warn the farmer on the weather conditions for the day, as well as daily market price levels to help them in the sale of their goods.

They also provide the farmers with tips on agricultural practices and techniques and send them the information through text messages. READ India helps by reaching out to farmers in need and connecting them with Kissan, encouraging their agricultural practices and introducing them to experts, to have their queries answered.

At the READ Social Development Centre in Nagonyachiwadi, the Centre recently helped farmers by overcoming the existing language barrier. The Kissan Sanchar Kendra in Chandigarh sent the Center a message with information on the weather, which we translated into Marathi. The Marathi message was then sent back to Kissan, who proceeded to spread the message to connected farmers across Maharashtra.

LIVELIHOOD

Training of Trainers under Accenture's Skills to Succeed Programme

From 23rd to 25th of November, READ India held a Training of Trainers session for our 10 Accenture READ Centres, under Accenture's Skills to Succeed Programme. The training was intended to increase the efficiency of the Centres, assess the impact of the training programmes, and ensure optimum accuracy and reliability of data collection and evaluation.

The 10 participating Centres are as follows:

1. Mohini READ India Centre, Devli
2. Geejgarh Gyan Kendra, Geejgarh
3. READ India Aghapur Community Centre, Rampur
4. Rural Education and Development Centre, Wazirabad
5. Dada Roop Chand READ India Gyan Kendra, Jhajjar
6. READ India Model Centre, Shahbad Mohammadpur
7. Rural Community Development Centre, Bagepalli
8. Rural Community Development Centre, Kadathatlapalli
9. READ Social Development Centre, Nagonyachiwadi
10. Gramoday Rural Education and Development Centre, Padalsingi



The programme consisted of nice sessions taken by both READ India trainers and programme coordinators, as well as experts. The topics are as follows:

1. Follow-up with Project Coordinators on work done from April to November 2016
2. Life Skills and Women Empowerment
3. Art Therapy
4. Achieving Sustainability through Community Enterprise
5. Community Tourism
6. Information Communication Technology

7. Education as a Social Enterprise for Self-Sustainability of the Centres

8. Data Collection and Impact Assessment

9. Follow-up on Financial Records and Submissions

The first session was taken by Mr. Shivam Sharma and Mr. Kamlesh Jha, to quantify the impact achieved thus far, evaluate the current level of trainings, and suggest actions to improve them. The main objective for each Center is to reach the targeted level of beneficiaries on time, and the data at hand showed remarkable progress towards that end.

Mr. Shivam also spoke on the new hierarchical structure of READ India which would be in effect from January 2017, and the role and responsibilities of each Center participant in this new structure.

Ms. Ruchika Dhingra conducted the second session on Life Skills and Women Empowerment, and clarified the modules which



would be covered next. She discussed the duties of the participants in each section of the Center, and introduced a schedule to be used in the Early Childhood Development section.

The Art Therapy training session was taken by Ms. Sonia Bhandari, who asked them to draw their “Focus towards Success” in the first activity, using five words: Connection, Place, Plan, My Comfort and With Who. The words helped the trainers to focus on what success meant to them. Most of the participants had drawn their family and their village, while some had even drawn their READ Center.

The second activity theme was “I will design my own life”, a group activity in which the aim was for the participants to draw what they viewed as beautiful and essential in their lives.

In the fourth session, Mr. Kumar Aman advised the participants on achieving sustainability through community enterprises, and taught them the concept of Six Sigma, along with the analysis techniques of DMAIC and SIPOC which are used to improve the quality of the processes in the enterprise.



Mr. Aman also conducted an activity on Education as a sustainable enterprise, in which participants used the above-mentioned techniques to make a proposal for a sustainable enterprise. This gave them clarity on their role at the Center and also gave them a base for the proposal of their sustainable enterprise. Lastly, Mr. Aman talked about the compliances which are to be followed when running a social enterprise or any organisation, and he recommended the participants to get the Centers registered properly.

Community Tourism is another method through which the participants can attract profit to their village while also creating plenty of jobs. Ms. Sujatha Sharma spoke on the idea of accommodating tourists and reaping the benefits of such.

Mr. Mahipal Singh Rawat took a session on Information Communication Tools (ICT), through which many villagers are

able to find employment in various professions. ICT also helps to create digital stories and videos, which can be used to train people or spread awareness on social issues.

Mr. Yashpal Malik gave ideas to the Center participants in regards to Monitoring and Evaluation and how to ensure that data collected is authentic and usable. He also taught the participants how to identify and acquire good data.

The last session was conducted by Mr. Dileep Jha, who spoke on the financial records of each Center. He gave them suggestions to help them understand how to acquire funds, settle advances, the presentation of bills, and so on.

The Training of Trainers Programme was thus concluded, with each trainer having much to think and work over with their Centers upon their return. The outcome of this training will be seen when we assess the impact in each Centre and analyse the data collected.



READ IMPACT

Belonging - The Story of Bhavana Sharma

Bhavana Sharma was 24 when her marriage uprooted her from her quaint, homely state of Uttarakhand to Shahbad Mohammadpur village, in the uninviting capital of Delhi. Her husband worked at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, while she stayed at home and did her duties as a housewife. Her 12th grade education meant nothing to the man, who imagined her to be a simple village girl, and treated her as lesser for it.

It was as she talked to her neighbours that Bhavana heard about the READ India Model Centre in her village. When she visited, she was pleased to find a variety of training programmes, and she decided to take the English Speaking Course, with the aim of fitting in better in her new home. But after the one month course, Bhavana felt the urge to learn and do more.

She chose to take up the 6 month Sewing and Stitching course, and there she thrived, learning a variety of cloth patterns and designs. Even after this, her interest in new programmes had not waned and she enrolled for the Computer Course in the Centre. Slowly, she came out from her shell as her confidence grew, and she began to socialize more with her neighbours and fellow community members.

The change was visible even to her husband, who began to understand that his behavior had been both cruel and unwarranted, leading him to amend himself by treating his wife better. Bhavana

continued to thrive in her new-found happiness, and went on to make a profession from her sewing skills.

Now, Bhavana has found a niche for herself in the village and earns a fair sum of 3000 rupees each month with the sale of clothes that she herself sows. Her life has turned around from what it was in 2013, and she credits the READ Model Centre and her own persistence for how far she has reached.



UPCOMING EVENTS

1. Impact of 2016 through Success Stories
2. Launch of READ Subcenter at Rampur
3. Phase 3 of Life Skills and Women Empowerment Training



READ India

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