



# MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT



OCTOBER 2016

# CONTENT

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## READ EXPANSION

- A Suitable Village: Ludhiana Assessment Visit

## HEALTH

- Follow-up of a Promise – Spectacles from SHARP
- Global Handwashing Day

## AGRICULTURE

- A Visit with the Tribe of Kalligutta Village

## LIVELIHOOD

- Diyas Light the Way for Self-Reliance
- The Classroom for Teachers

## INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- The Impact of Radio Waves

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Oceanic Library in the News

## READ IMPACT

- Case Story: The Farming Initiatives of B. Shankar Reddy

# READ EXPANSION

## A Suitable Village: Ludhiana Assessment Visit

On the 14th of October, READ India made an assessment of five villages in Ludhiana to find a suitable place for the establishment of a READ Centre. The assessment was conducted by Mrs. Sunita Roy and Mr. Baljeet Chaurasia, and the shortlisted villages are Katana Sahib, Rampur, Begowal, Doraha and Kohara. They are

located within 5 to 10 kilometers of each other.

The first three villages were found to be underdeveloped and missing out on basic amenities, while the latter two were fairly well-developed and equipped with the necessary facilities for a good quality of life. Thus, READ India chose to focus on the Katana Sahib, Rampur and Begowal villages, which required need-based



interventions as compared to the other two.

<b>Village</b>	<b>Number of Households</b>	<b>Population</b>
<b>Katana Sahib</b>	161	707
<b>Begowal</b>	636	3189
<b>Rampur</b>	520	5500

After holding Focus Group Discussions in the chosen three villages, we found their response to our proposal to be positive. The community members were in favour of the interventions and programmes which we wished to introduce to their village.

The Katana Sahib village consisted of a population of 707 people; the READ team met with the Ex-Sarpanch (ex-Head of Village), the Government Primary School Principal, Aanganwadi workers and other members of the community.

The villagers expressed their need to increase access to basic facilities, which they lacked in their own village. Due to this, they were often forced to travel far away to other villages to avail these services, which led to an unnecessary waste of both their time and their money.

In Begowal, the community members were interested in improving the rate of employment through learning specific skills such as resume writing, facing an interview, communication and personality development.

One of the ideas developed during the discussion by the community members themselves involved creating tabloids to share local issues with the community; this would lead to increased awareness in the village and encourage action from the government.

Rampur Village was the most populated of the three, with 5500 villagers spread over a mere 520 households. In the discussion, the community members aired their concerns over what their village required, and the READ Team talked to them about our workshops and activities.

After understanding the READ India Model, the Sarpanch and Panches agreed to provide a space at the Community Library where these workshops could be held. The Sarpanch resolved to involve the entire village in the workshops, to take the step towards resolving their problems.

Unemployment is one of these problems, and there was a need for youth guidance, to help them find their future. Basic facilities such as healthcare clinics, schools, playgrounds and the community library were available but implementation of these services left much to be desired.

#### **The areas where intervention is required:-**

- 1. Health Care Facilities**
- 2. Secondary Education**
- 3. Employment**
- 4. Potable Water**
- 5. Transportation**

Upon appraising these villages, the conclusion is that the need for general awareness and useful information is most important. The READ team decided to form a group to focus on each area and create activities and workshops through which the villagers can learn self-sustaining practices as well as livelihood skills to achieve stable employment.

# HEALTH

## Follow-up of a Promise – Spectacles from SHARP

In September, an Eye Camp had been held at the Jhamwas Centre with the collaboration of the READ Centre and SHARP, with 78 participants. Of these, 37 individuals were identified as being in immediate need of spectacles, which SHARP had offered to provide. Following up from this Eye Camp, on the 15th of October, SHARP arrived once again at the Jhamwas Centre to provide spectacles to the 37 participants with low vision. The patients were delighted to receive the gifts as they thanked both SHARP and the READ Amazon Centre for the camp and for the spectacles.

## Global Handwashing Day

Handwashing involves one of the simplest set of actions one can take to prevent the spread of diseases, but not everyone strictly adheres to these steps. As the winter season sets in, it is important that each person becomes aware of how to equip themselves against bacteria and viruses which spread and remain active longer in lower temperatures.

On the 15th of October, READ India observed Global Handwashing Day, with the global theme this year being “Make Handwashing a Habit”. Each centre celebrated the international event with different activities, and invited key figures from the village such as the Sarpanch (Head of Village), teachers from the community schools, teachers and students from the Aanganwadis, parents of students, and other resource people.

Each student and their family were presented with individual school kits, and they were shown a short film which highlighted the causes of the spread of diseases and for poor health. They were also shown the steps for proper handwashing, to ensure clean hands. Teaching people these steps until handwashing becomes second nature in their daily routine is one of the goals of this year, for preventing disease and maintaining one’s health.



# AGRICULTURE

## A Visit with the Tribe of Kalligutta Village

On the 20th of October, Mr. Nahid Jubair of READ India visited a tribal village called Kalligutta. He was accompanied by the Kadathatlapalli READ Centre Coordinator, Mr. Krishnamurthy, and a consultant, Mrs. Shailaja Phaneendra. The village is situated approximately three kilometers away from the Kadathatlapalli Centre, on the edge of the Kaundinya Wildlife Sanctuary. The objective was to interact with the tribal villagers and understand their needs, following which suitable programmes could be introduced.

During the group discussion with 35 tribal men and women, the READ team found that the villagers were interested in agricultural and non-timber forest products such as honey and groundnut processing, as their dependence on the nearby forest was the basis for their lifestyle. They also requested programmes centred on Hygiene and Health awareness. By the end of the discussion, the villagers and the READ team had decided on a plan to introduce training in Groundnut Oil processing, owing to the abundance of groundnuts in the forest and the interest of the villagers.



# LIVELIHOOD

## Diwali Exhibition at Amazon FC

An exhibition of products from the READ India Centres was held at the Amazon Fulfillment Centre (FC) on the 21st and 22nd of October, just a week before the Festival of Lights, Diwali.

The products included beautiful hand-made diyas and scented candles, made by the women community members of Jhajjar, Karmad and Kadarapur Villages. Other products include woolen sweaters, mufflers and hats which sold well due to the oncoming

winter season. The READ India stalls were up for nearly 8 hours, and the Diyas, in particular, were a huge hit. The products managed to sell for a total of Rs. 4,400 and the employees at the Amazon FC were impressed at the range and quality of the products.

This exhibition has given the women a chance to interact with different customers and understand the market needs in anticipation of future sales. It is the drawing board for new entrepreneurial ideas to emerge, by which the women can reach a wider range of people for their business.



# INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

## The Impact of Radio Waves

The Dada Roop Chand Gyan Kendra Centre in Jhajjar held a workshop on 'Using Multimedia Tools for Knowledge Dissemination', under Accenture's "Skills to Succeed Programme". 29 young girls from the villages of Mehndipur, Dabodha and Tandaheri participated in the training workshop which was conducted by Mr. Mahipal Singh Rawat, READ India Programme Officer for Multimedia, ICT and Production.



The workshop took place from the 17th to the 19th, and on the final day of the workshop, we saw visits from Mr. Ramesh Chander, the District Collector of Jhajjar; Mr. Ranjiv Dala, the Former DGP of Haryana and Former Director of HIPA; Brigadier Dalal; HCS and Team and other dignitaries and community members.

Mr. Mahipal taught the young girls about the use of Multimedia Tools in creating Audio Programmes and Digital Stories, and how a Community Radio is essential to a rural area. The radio helps bring

attention to social causes and the girls were taught about the different types of radio stations and programmes and the stages of radio production to create relevant programmes on social issues in their communities. They were trained in script writing, pronunciation and expression, strengthening of memory, voice modulation, recording techniques and different camera angles.

The girls found the experience both interesting and fun and took to the programme quickly, eager to begin on creating their own programmes. By the end of the workshop, they had learned the essentials of radio programme production and requested more of these sessions.

# HIGHLIGHTS

## Oceanic Library in the News

The Oceanic Library was the first Centre project developed in 2008 by READ India and READ Global in the village of Ullon, West Bengal. Partnered with Vivekananda Sevakendra-O-Sishu Uddyan (VSSU), the Library has grown in leaps and bounds over the years.

On the 18th of October, the Oceanic Library appeared in a news article titled “A Library with Opportunity”, in The Telegraph, Calcutta. The journalist, Ms. Samhita Chakraborty, had visited the Library to understand the benefits of the READ Model and how the library has helped its’ neighbouring villages and communities. Joining her were Mrs. Kalpana Dasgupta, founder-member of READ India, and Mr. Omer L. Rains, former American Senator and former Chairman of Board of Directors of READ Global.

The Oceanic Library is essentially a role model for the other READ Centres, as seen by how it has expanded in terms of both services as well as the members it has reached. A year after its establishment in 2009, it had 35 members. But by 2016, the number of members has increased exponentially to 730.

It has become a safe space for many women and young girls, and meets a variety of needs within the community, for education, empowerment and livelihood. The Library also provides countless books to its members, for all age groups and subjects as needed, and will continue to work with the support of the village and its partners.



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Front Page > Calcutta > Story

### LIBRARY WITH OCEAN OF OPPORTUNITY

Samhita chakraborty

In a village two hours out of Calcutta stands a three-storey white mansion in British colonial style. Inside, five-year-old Moumita Sikari is learning 'C' for 'C' means *Dora*. Homemaker Kakoli Halder is reading up on children's tales to daughter demands a story for every meal. "A mother is always in need of new laughs.



Omer L. Rains, former American senator and Read Global chair, with VSSU founder Kapilananda Mondal outside Oceanic Library in Ullon village. Pictures by Arnab Mondal

# READ IMPACT

## Case Story: The Farming Initiatives of B. Shankar Reddy

Pathurunatham village is located in Baireddypalli block, in the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. Despite being tucked away in a scenic, verdant and mountainous setting, it is a poor village, with the majority of the population comprised of low-literate small-hold farmers. The tiny village owes a lot to B. Shankar Reddy for the progress it has seen in terms of farming, as he has been a role model for his use of innovative techniques and practices in



agriculture. This year, however, even Shankar had his fair share of road bumps which threatened to disrupt his livelihood.

Hardly a month after planting 1,200 Red Lady papaya plants in an acre of land, Shankar's crops were infested with mealy bugs which were on the brink of destroying the entire plantation. The potential income of Rs. 5 lakhs from cultivating the papaya was at risk, and he and his son were at a loss on what to do.

Shankar spoke about his worries at the READ Community Development Centre in Kadathalapalli, where he was given the contact number of the Kissan Sanchar Kendra (KSK). The KSK offers services and solutions to farmers in need of agricultural information, using mobile phone messages and calls to connect with them. The READ Centre has partnered with KSK to provide aid to over 100 farmers in the Baireddypalli mandal.

Shankar was encouraged to call in to KSK, who advised him to use Bavistan medicine to save his plantation. Within a month of applying the medicine, the mealy bug infestation was removed, and his papaya plants were safe. The relief was visible on Shankar's face. "My crops have been spared, and once we harvest them, we will reap its worth of 5 lakhs. My family is so pleased that we have not lost all our hard work. It is thanks to the READ Centre here," he said.

With the reassurance of the KSK and the READ Centre's aid, Shankar Reddy is ready to face the harvest season as planned and continue his farming practices with the same persistence and confidence that he has always displayed.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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1. Training of Trainers under Accenture's 'Skills to Succeed' Programme
2. Phase 3 of Life Skills and Woman Empowerment Training in READ Centres
3. Rally for Beti Bachao, Beti Padoo
4. Establishing final enclosure for Oyster Mushroom farming in Tauru, Haryana
5. Sports for Development programme at Haryana



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