

The Footprint

Volume - I April-June



CEO's Message

Dear Stakeholders, Partners, and Fellow YCDAians,

As we enter a new quarter and a new financial year, I would like to take a moment to extend my warmest greetings to all of you. Congratulations on successfully completing the financial year 2022-23, which was undoubtedly a challenging time for all of us in the development arena due to the pandemic. Despite these challenges, I am

proud to share that YCDA has not only met deadlines but also delivered tangible changes on the ground.

Moving forward, I want to assure you that our commitment to our cause will remain unwavering. We will continue to work hard to serve and empower marginalized communities, with the objective of building empowered communities through empowered families.

Reflecting on YCDA's 30 years of work, I am pleased to say that the organization's relevance remains as strong as ever. We have achieved this by introspecting on our approach towards communities and focusing on innovation, and we will continue to do so in the new year.

Over the past three decades, we have been fortunate to enjoy the mutual trust, credibility, and faith of our partners, some of whom have been with us for more than two decades. We have collaborated with new partners and focused on building credibility, integrity, and mutual respect. Our partners have stood with us in all weathers, and we hope that this will continue in the years to come.

Finally, I want to acknowledge that YCDAians are the backbone of every change that YCDA has brought in and aims to achieve. I urge you all to continue to devote your enthusiasm, spirit, and commitment to our mission of creating alternatives and delivering change.

Thank you all for your ongoing support and dedication.

Sincerely,

Rajendra Meher

Secretary Cum CEO

Youth Council for Development Alternatives

In a Nutshell

- YCDA celebrated its 30th anniversary with great fanfare on January 12th.
- A team from SOUL, an initiative of KISS - Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, visited our office and engaged with our colleagues.
- As part of the Holistic Rural Development Project, we observed National Science Day at five primary schools in the Kendrapada district.
- A training session for 32 small entrepreneurs on millet entrepreneurship took place at Khaprakhol, with participation from bankers, representatives from ICDS, and Mission Shakti.
- On March 12th, YCDA organized a round-table discussion on the problems and challenges faced by care leavers.
- Team YCDA visited Srijan Foundation, a leading social organization in Jharkhand, for an exposure visit. During our time together, we discussed best practices, models that can be scaled up, and shared learnings to help us grow together.
- Project staff from "Building Resilience for a Better Future" participated in Action Research Training 2023 in Patna. Representatives from six partner organizations and Kinderpostzegel were also present.
- Training sessions on design making were organized for women entrepreneurs at different locations in the Boudh District.
- In collaboration with SEWA Bharat, YCDA conducted two training sessions for women entrepreneurs in Tikrapada and Patanagada of Bolangir district. Seventy-five women were made aware of different aspects of entrepreneurship and dairy farming.
- Mental Health Project staff participated in a 5-day refresher training program organized by Basic Need India.

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Participation in HDFC Partners' Meet

YCDA, in collaboration with HDFC Bank, has initiated the Holistic Rural Development Project (HRDP) in 20 villages across five Gram Panchayats in Kendrapara district. The project aims to promote climate-resilient agriculture practices, transform primary education, natural resource management, and improve health and hygiene. During the HDFC Paribarttan Partners' meet event at Ranchi on 5th-6th February, we showcased our best practices related to climate-resilient agriculture and shared the success story of Mr. Rashmi Ranjan Das, who used vermicompost to improve his crop yield and income.



30th Anniversary Celebrations

On January 12th, YCDA celebrated its 30th Anniversary with a range of significant activities. The event included a development dialogue on the localization of Sustainable Development Goals, the inauguration of a Coffee Table Book documenting YCDA's 30-year journey, and the publication of an Odia Booklet (the first of its kind) on the localization of SDGs and the role of Civil Society Organizations. Additionally, a plenary session on YCDA's 30-year journey was held, followed by a cultural evening with cultural activities, felicitations, and fun activities. The event attracted over 250 participants from NGO and civil society representatives, development practitioners, academicians, YCDA staff, and well-wishers from different parts of the state who participated in this one-day event.



Roundtable on Care Leaver's problems

YCDA is a champion for foster care and care leavers in Odisha. To raise awareness about their issues, challenges, and potential solutions to improve their situation, YCDA and the Odisha Care Leaver's Association organized a multi-sector stakeholder roundtable. Intellectuals, academics, social entrepreneurs, writers, and development practitioners were invited, along with 30 care leavers. This roundtable was the first of its kind to address the care leaver's issue, and it helped to highlight the gravity of the issue to a wider audience while also opening doors for new opportunities and collaborations.





Meeting with Honourable Governor

On March 10th, Team YCDA, led by its CEO Mr. Rajendra Meher, paid a courtesy visit to Prof. Ganeshi Lal, the Honourable Governor of Odisha. The primary objective of the visit was to update His Excellency on our work and present him with a copy of our Coffee Table Book. The Governor attentively listened to our presentation and encouraged us to persevere in our efforts to support the marginalized.



The Melon and Pumpkin Mountain

During the first quarter of the year, vast tracts of upland in Kantamal Block used to lie barren, but thanks to our Agricultural Production Cluster (APC) initiative, these lands are now being put to productive use. Hundreds of farmers have joined our program and are now growing a variety of crops, including watermelon, pumpkin, and other vegetables. The APC provides them with the means to procure and sell their produce at market prices, and in this quarter alone, they have produced and sold over 100 quintals of watermelon and 60 quintals of pumpkin through our program. The APC initiative is making a significant impact on the local community, not only by helping farmers increase their income and avoid distress sales but also by promoting the use of land in a productive and eco-friendly manner.



Scoring 100 out Of 100

Our Khaprakhol team has achieved a remarkable feat by scoring a perfect 100 out of 100 under the Millet Mission intervention. This season, the team procured an impressive 4522 quintals of Ragi, meeting their procurement target in full. In addition to their procurement efforts, the team utilized local folk art forms like Palaa to promote the consumption of millet among the general public. The team also launched several initiatives, such as Millet Snack Stalls, and organized workshops for millet farmers and entrepreneurs.



Livestock for a better Livelihood

Kendrapada, being a climatically vulnerable district, is heavily reliant on agriculture, which is subject to the whims of nature. Therefore, the role of livestock in supplementing farmers' income cannot be overstated. As a significant step towards this end, we have distributed Black Bengal breed goats to 20 beneficiaries in Penthapal and Singhagaon Gram Panchayat of Kendrapada district under the HRDP project. Additionally, we have organized several Animal Health Camps where livestock vaccinations are provided to ensure their good health. This initiative is not only helping farmers diversify their income streams but also ensuring the well-being of their livestock, which is vital to their livelihood.



Stories of Change



Carrot on the Stick

Over the past decade, the farmers of Durgapur Gram Panchayat in Chhendipada, Angul have been growing carrots on a small scale, facing multiple challenges such as limited market access and lack of technical support. However, with the intervention of the Agricultural Production Cluster, the women farmers of Durgapur have found solutions to most of their problems. With the working capital of 5 lakhs provided by Odisha Livelihood Mission, they collectively started cultivating carrots on 17 acres of land. Pradan provided them with the necessary technical assistance, and YCDA facilitated the APC and market linkage. The production was significant, and each of the APC members received a substantial share of the profits from selling their harvest.

Rita Sahu of Mahamaya Producer Group spoke about the transformation this initiative has brought about, noting that carrot cultivation has not only provided her with a substantial income from her 50-decimal plot but has also reduced her dependency on proper irrigation as carrots require less water. The members are now planning to expand their cultivation area this year.

The success of the carrot cultivation initiative through the APC in Durgapur has not only increased the incomes of women farmers but has also changed their perspective towards agriculture. YCDA is proud to be a part of this transformative change and will continue to support the farmers of Durgapur and other areas in their pursuit of a sustainable livelihood.

The Onion that Brought Tears of Joy

The district of Boudh has long been famous for its onion cultivation. However, during the last Khariff season, farmers in the Kantamal Block added two new feathers to their caps. Firstly, they achieved massive production of Khariff onions, and secondly, they transformed to Non-Pesticide Management (NPM) forms of production.

Under the Khariff Onion Cluster, a joint initiative by YCDA, BRLF, Pradan, and the District Administration, approximately 275 farmers came together to cultivate onions around 125 acres of land. YCDA played a critical role in various activities such as farmer identification, training in convergence with NHRDF, exposure visits, collective/individual nursery raising, providing poly sheets to farmers, and marketing support.

The results were phenomenal, with farmers earning over 50,000 rupees per acre in just three months. This initiative not only helped in crop diversification from paddy to onions but also contributed towards the transformation of agricultural practices towards NPM. While it may take time to institutionalize this practice, the added income, ease of harvesting, and marketing support will undoubtedly act as a catalyst in this regard. YCDA is proud of this transformation, where onions have become a reason for tears of joy for farmers in Kantamal Block.



Social media Snapshot- Social Media Update about us by outsiders, partners



Upcoming Events

Updates for Next Quarter

Youth Council for Development Alternatives (YCDA) is a non-profit organization based in Odisha, India. YCDA was established in 1993 with the mission to empower marginalized communities and promote sustainable development through participatory approaches.

YCDA focuses on promoting the well-being and rights of marginalized communities, especially women, children, and youth, through community-based initiatives. The organization works on a range of thematic areas, including livelihoods, education, health, governance, disaster management, and environmental sustainability.

YCDA's work is guided by principles of social justice, gender equity, and sustainability. The organization adopts a participatory approach to development, involving communities in project planning, implementation, and monitoring.

YCDA has a dedicated team of professionals with expertise in various domains, including community mobilization, project management, research, and advocacy. The organization also has a strong network of volunteers and community leaders who contribute to the implementation of its programs.

Overall, YCDA's work has made a significant impact on the lives of marginalized communities in Odisha. The organization has received recognition and awards for its innovative approaches to community development and sustainability.



YCDA Brief Profile

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