



Friendships form among the young women in the tailoring classes.

KALIYACHAK KANYA SHIKSHA SETU

Kaliyachak Learning Bridge for Girls

Enabling girls from vulnerable communities to reach learning levels commensurate with their age

Foundation for Rural Recovery and Development

December 2025

Background

The Kaliyachak Learning Bridge for Girls functions on the premises of Samaj Kalyan Mandal, in the village of Kaliyachak, District Nalanda, Bihar. Samaj Kalyan Mandal is a 40 year old community-based organization. The Learning Centre has classes from Standard 1 to 6 and operates six days a week, in the mornings in summer, and in the afternoon in winter. The students come from Kaliyachak and the neighbouring hamlets of Saristanagar, Aganu bigha, Mal bigha, Linepar, Nauliya bigha, Bhadauan and Bhat bigha. Approximately 75% of the girls enrolled in the Centre regularly attend the government school later in the day. The rest return home to help with household chores and care for their siblings.



Students of Standard 2

Student Enrollment

Class	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
No of students	34	27	22	14	09	15	121
Teacher	Sinku	Tarawati	Shravan	Vikash	Priyanka	Ranjeet (Head teacher)	

Summer and Winter Schedules

The local government schools have different schedules for summer and winter. As a consequence, the Learning Centre also adjusts its schedule accordingly. In summer, the Centre runs classes from 3:15 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. and in winter from 6:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. The summer months, which are agriculturally idle, see a slight drop in student enrollment as families migrate to work in brick kilns, rice mills and as contract labor in cities.

Improving Reading Skills

As reported previously, teachers are encouraging the students to read aloud in class to improve their reading skills. Each student takes a turn reading aloud several paragraphs of the lesson being taught in class every day. The teachers have reported an improvement in fluency. Of the 15 children in Standard 6, nearly half read aloud with more confidence and comprehension than they did before. Teachers have reported that the students are not intimidated by mistakes they might make and are comfortable with being corrected. We plan to continue this practice for all classes to improve the girls' reading and comprehension skills.

The provisional version of the Annual Status of Education Report for 2024 has been published (<https://asercentre.org/>). The report records a pan-India improvement in student enrollment as well as functional literacy and numeracy, even though the overall academic performance of children remains less than satisfactory. Notably, Bihar performs very favourably compared to most other states when it comes to student enrollment in the 6 – 14 age group but there is a decline when compared to 2022. 82.2% of children had been enrolled in 2022 compared to 80.1% in 2024. In India's most populous state, a 2% drop is significant.

Bihar was among the worst performing states when it came to student attendance (55.2%) though there has been a marginal improvement from 2022 (54.6%). The percentage of children in Standard 3 who can read a Standard 2 text has improved significantly compared to 2022, 12.9% to 20.1%. The percentage of children in Standard 3 who can do subtraction has likewise shown improvement from 2022, 12.9% to 20.1%. On both these measures however, Bihar ranks only just above the worst performing states.

These statistics help to clearly focus us on our mission. More important than fulfilling the curriculum requirements, it is vital that we focus intensively on functional numeracy and literacy – so that these students, irrespective of how far they advance in formal education, attain Standard 6 levels for reading, writing and basic mathematics.



Reading newspapers aloud at morning assembly helps the girls gain confidence in their reading skills.

Examinations and Tests : Moving Away from Rote Learning

Exams at both the Centre and in the local government schools tend to be an exercise in rote learning. This year we are encouraging reading and narration from story books to improve fluency and understanding. We are also conducting regular tests to familiarize the students with answering questions in their own words in order to better assess their comprehension. The first rounds of tests were completed in August. Another round of tests took place in October and the next round is scheduled for December.

Workshop on Food Groups and a Balanced Plate

FORRAD held a half-day session with the teachers on 6th March to introduce them to the basic food groups, their primary function and sources. The session also included discussions on what constitutes a balanced plate. Only one of the teachers was familiar with the food groups and none of them were clear on the functions each food group performed or their primary sources. Instinctively though, many of the teachers knew what a balanced plate should look like though predictably enough, carbohydrates were prioritized and potatoes were considered vegetables!

The teachers found the session engaging and they shared what they learned with their students. We will be repeating this session, this time making it more detailed and stressing the importance of crop diversity and growing vegetables to make nutritious food more accessible to all.

A Day Trip to Rajgir

Eighteen children from classes 4, 5, and 6 went on a day trip to Rajgir and the surrounding areas on 21st February. They were accompanied by four adults. They toured the remains of Nalanda University – one of the oldest and most revered universities in the world. They visited the zoo as children must and experienced the natural wonder of the local hot springs.



One of the biggest thrills of the trip was the walk across the glass bridge, the first of its kind in India and definitely a very special treat for the students and teachers.

Rajgir holds cultural, religious and historical significance for the country. It is also of ecological significance. Just an hour and a half from Kaliyachak – this was the first time that any of the students had visited any of these sites. We are sure the memories will remain.

The glass bridge at Rajgir was a thrill.



Rachita Sinha working with the alphabet. The kids found the color VERY attractive.

The Potential of the Arts as Media for Expression and Education

A one day workshop was organized for the children and the teachers on the 13th of October. Rachita Sinha and Ramnath Chandrashekhar, co-founders of Youth Conservation Action Network (YouCAN), spent the day with the girls to help them explore their creative potential through art, painting using different media, and origami. The students as well as the teachers enjoyed the activities and are looking forward to the next visit from YouCAN.

The workshop with the teachers was an interactive session which covered the challenges teachers may face in the classroom and what solutions could be. The teachers participated with a lot of enthusiasm and made a list of the challenges they face while teaching their respective classes. Then through a guided question and answer session, they all came up with the different ways and styles of teaching that help the students understand and remember what is taught.

The teachers were each given an activity where they had to demonstrate the different techniques that a teacher could use to make it easy and interesting for the students to learn and understand concepts in each subject. The session ended with origami where all the teachers enjoyed learning how to make paper birds.

Celebrating Chhath

Chhath puja is one of the most important festivals celebrated in Bihar. It is a four day celebration of gratitude to the sun God and nature. The entire community gathers at the river bank to worship the sun and make offerings of fruit, flowers and sweets. In the Saturday sessions with their teachers, the children talked about how they celebrated with their families and their community in their respective villages. The girls were encouraged to illustrate their celebrations. Notably Chhath is one of the few occasions where boundaries of caste are set aside and the community celebrates as a whole.



Art in progress.



Illustrations of Chhath puja

A Sub-Centre in Saristabad

The teachers have been visiting the villages where their students live frequently during the past year as part of FORRAD's child nutrition program. During these visits they met many girls, particularly in the village of Saristabad, who are above 10 years of age and have never been to school. Three girls approached the Learning Centre teachers and asked to be enrolled. The teachers have been providing extra classes for them as they feel awkward sitting in class one with the six year olds. We are planning to start a Centre in Saristabad for older girls such as these who've never been to school. We also plan to welcome their parents if they show interest. The sub-centre is scheduled to open January 2026.



Friendships are forming among the young women in the tailoring classes.

Tailoring Classes

The tailoring class continues to run in two batches:

10 am to 12pm with 8 trainees

12pm to 2pm with 13 trainees

Each course lasts six months after which the trainees are able to sew garments of everyday use. They learn to sew for themselves and their families as well as earn pin money sewing for the neighbors.

One more sewing machine has been purchased bringing the total number of machines to five. The trainees at the sewing centre are also being provided the same nutritious snacks that are offered to the students at the Learning Centre.

Foundation for Rural Recovery and Development

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The Foundation for Rural Recovery and Development (FORRAD) was established in Delhi in January 1980 with the objective of promoting, supporting and coordinating projects related to community-based rural development. FORRAD works primarily to address the needs of smallholder farmers and sharecroppers, and their families, focusing largely on water security and regenerative agriculture to mitigate the impact of anthropogenic climate change.

FORRAD has over the years implemented more than 500 projects across rural India. Equal opportunities between genders, castes and communities, and equal pay for equal work, are the starting point for all initiatives undertaken by the foundation. All FORRAD projects address the intersecting issues of social justice, community empowerment, girls' education and health care.