



At a Glance

CENTRE FOR CATALYZING CHANGE

C3 is uniquely positioned at the intersection of evidence, systems, and gender transformation. With nearly four decades of experience, C3 designs and delivers gender-transformative adolescent programming that is embedded within government education, health, and community systems, enabling scale, sustainability, and policy uptake. By working simultaneously with girls, boys, families, and institutions, C3 achieves durable shifts in gender norms through system change rather than isolated individual-level change.

Founding Background

Centre for Catalyzing Change (C3), previously known as the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA), began investing in programming for adolescents and young people in India in 1987. With the launch of the Better Life Options Program (BLP), CEDPA initiated

its pioneering work in India to support adolescent girls and young women in making informed decisions about their health, economic status, civic participation, educational attainment, and employment.

In 2002, it established itself as an Indian entity by registering as CEDPA India, continuing its affiliation to CEDPA. In 2010,

the organisation officially separated from CEDPA and continued its programming for adolescents and young people as an independent organisation under the name CEDPA India. In 2014, it rebranded itself as Centre for Catalyzing Change (C3) and fully removed all brand affiliations and associations with the name CEDPA.

Overview of Programs Offered

C3 has a number of in school and out of school options programming for girls and young people. The two that are most relevant for their gender norms work include Udaan and Tarang.

Udaan

C3's Udaan program was designed to empower young people, and foster a significant shift in their lives. It was launched in Jharkhand in 2006 within 500 schools and was expanded to 5202 schools (2638 secondary and 2564 middle schools) by 2018. While the program began with serving adolescent girls, the current version of the Udaan program works with both boys and girls with a focus on life skills, adolescent issues, sexual and reproductive health, social norms, and values.

Tarang

In 2010, when the Udaan program was taken to Bihar in an expansion of its geographic reach, the program was updated.. Tarang worked with both boys and girls from grades 6 through

11. The program provided access to education and leadership development. Its curriculum also engaged boys around gender equality through discussions about masculinity, and aimed to produce shifts in mindsets and behaviors around social norms. Today Udaan and Tarang have been mainstreamed into School Health and Wellness Program (SHWP) under the aegis of Ayushman Bharat initiative of Government of India.

Additional Programs

While Udaan and Tarang are central initiatives focused on shifting adolescent gender norms, additional youth-focused programs include: Akanksha which works to address the digital divide faced by adolescent girls in tribal areas; Manjari supports girls in completing secondary school; Sangwari addresses sexual and reproductive health knowledge in the state of Chattisgarh; and Badhtey Kadam which develops the financial and digital literacy of adolescent girls.

Balance for the Better is C3's gender norm shift intervention with boys in Jharkhand. Through this intervention it is desired that young boys can be influenced to develop gender egalitarian attitudes, demonstrate positive masculinities, and counter gender stereotypes in their communities leading to a balance in the genders. This was built on the learnings of Do Kadam Barabari ki Ore ((Two steps towards equality) implemented in Bihar with boys to reduce gender-based violence.

Target Population

C3's adolescent programs primarily serve girls and boys between the grades of 6 and 12, between the ages of 10-19, and works in both in school and out-of-school contexts. Several programs focused on adolescent girls (Manjari, Akanksha, Badhtey Kadam). However, signature programs such as Udaan and Tarang work with both boys and girls as part of a broader framework that recognizes the importance of addressing gender norms with boys and men in efforts towards gender equity. Some programs also work with women in leadership and economic empowerment.

While the target population includes beneficiaries, as C3's model is systemic, it also engages multiple actors in the system including: family members, teachers, school principals, frontline health workers, cluster coordinators, panchayat leaders and local influencers.

Relationship to Formal Systems

C3 believes that shifts in larger ecosystems are necessary for any kind of long term and deep change. As such, C3's adolescent programming is explicitly designed to complement rather than replace formal systems, working through government-led health, educational institutions and local governance (panchayats). Delivery is aligned with state and district implementation plans, using capacity-building and facilitation rather

than outsourced service provision. This embedded approach enhances scalability, sustainability and policy uptake, reinforcing C3's systems-led gender norm shift model.

Since 2006, C3 has been working closely with systems of education and broader government. It has formal multiyear agreements with the various state government and line departments and closely works with systems in implementing and scaling up its projects. C3 delivers programs at scale in partnership with the government; it works with system actors to embed programs within schools, and provides technical assistance to ensure successful implementation. To that end, in 2024, the Supreme Court of India¹, cited the Udaan program as a successful model for adolescent education in India.

In addition to implementation, due to its long institutional history, C3 has significant credibility and therefore is able to influence policy design and implementation, connecting evidence, advocacy and local engagement for systems-level change.

Program Structure and Duration

Each program has a context specific structure and duration. C3 programs are typically medium-to-long-term cycles (ranging from 1 to 5 years depending on state implementation), embedded within school systems, health platforms (e.g., AFHC under RKSK), and community structures. Udaan was initially structured

as a 3-4 week intensive intervention when introduced into the state school infrastructure, and subsequently transitioned into a weekly module cycle.

Program Delivery

C3 delivers its programs through a multi-tiered facilitation model, combining teacher and peer-led adolescent group sessions, trained facilitators, and community mobilization via events and outreach activities. Cluster and block coordinators engage with local leaders and government officials to align activities with public systems. The Udaan program first targeted students in classes 9 and 11 but was later expanded to include students in standards 6, 7, and 8. Udaan became a mandatory part of the school curriculum in Jharkhand, taught by designated teachers. C3 provided training and ongoing technical support for trainers and teachers in the Education Department.

Curriculum

Udaan has a 13-module curriculum focused on life skills, goal setting, mental health, gender discrimination, hygiene, violence and

reproductive health, friendship, marriage and parenthood, sexual harassment among other topics. Its pedagogical methods include participatory teaching such as games, stories, case studies, and quizzes. A significant achievement was integration of the Udaan curriculum into textbooks across different subjects in 2017 in Jharkhand during a curriculum reform process.

Geography and Reach

C3 works in 12 states across India including: Uttarakhand, Punjab, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, Assam. Out of these states, C3 has state offices in 7 locations and has project offices in the remaining states. C3 is selective in its choice of regions. These areas are predominantly rural, tribal and economically underserved, with high prevalence of early marriage and limited access to educational opportunities. Geographic targeting aligns with systemic gaps and is embedded within district-level government implementation structures, supporting long-term scalability and institutional integration.

For more information, see: c3india.org



OVERVIEW AND MISSION

C3 has been in operation since 1987 with a clear vision of an India in which girls and women are fully empowered and equipped to realize their rights, access opportunities, and achieve gender equality. As such, C3's primary area of work is to mobilize girls and women, and to engage boys around addressing harmful gender norms. At the core of the organization's approach is a belief that gender equality is central to development, democracy and progress.

THEORY OF CHANGE

How Does Centre for Catalyzing Change's Programming Shift Gender Norms?

According to C3, the process of achieving gender equality requires fundamental, systemic changes that can be sustained over a long period of time that can translate into lasting socio-economic impact. C3's theory of change is based on the premise that when adolescent girls gain agency, life-skills, and supportive environments, and when families, communities, and public systems are engaged as allies, gender norms can be shifted sustainably. The foundation lies in strengthening adolescent voice and decision-making power while simultaneously addressing structural barriers.

Therefore, the gender norms programming that C3 implements is anchored in an understanding of gender that is based on the Social Ecological Model (SEM). SEM argues that that behavior is influenced by multiple levels of interactions: intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational, community, physical environment, and policy. C3 seeks to use a gender-transformative approach to systematically shift gender norms by addressing these levels through innovative and comprehensive interventions such as the programs detailed above. Gender norms analysis is interwoven within the program curriculum. C3 contends that the process of working towards and achieving gender equality is intrinsically tied to shifting prevailing patriarchal norms that hinder the agency of women and girls, confine them into rigid gender roles, and perpetuate discrimination and violence.

Furthermore, due to its holistic and systems oriented understanding, C3 works closely with existing systems, from local health institutions and service providers, schools, teachers and principals, Panchayats, Anganwadis and other government authorities, state and national ministries and government officials; to build, incubate and develop at-scale solutions that have positively impacted, and continue to impact, millions of girls and women in India.

Research and Program Evaluations

C3 conducts ongoing monitoring and evaluation to measure impact of its programs through mixed methods including surveys, focus group discussions, and qualitative interviews. C3 measures the success of a shifting gender norms program by assessing changes in attitudes, behaviors, and practices related to gender. Specifically, the organization uses indicators including shifts in gendered behaviors, participation in decision making amongst young women, and reduction of gender-based discrimination. Additional indicators include economic participation and access to education such as secondary school completion and access to higher education are also markers used to assess program influence.

Research has illustrated that teachers often struggle to address gender and sexual and reproductive health due to their own beliefs and attitudes. To address this, C3 developed a Behavioural Assessment Framework and Tool to understand and subsequently align teacher training to address these needs. C3 conducted informal interactions and psychometric assessment with select teachers to identify existing gaps and opportunities in training, pinpoint areas where teacher engagement is lacking, explored reasons for non-participation on certain topics, and defined broad outcomes for teacher training and overall learning and development efforts. This assessment is under development, and will be applied & used at scale.

C3 has collaborated with academic partners,

INGOs, and government institutions for research and to use its evaluation data into actionable advocacy for better policies. For instance, C3's collaborative research with the World Health Organization examined C3's successful scale up of the Udaan program with the Department of Education in Jharkhand. The research illustrated how enabling policy environments, careful vertical and horizontal planning leads to effective and sustainable scaling up of an in-school adolescent education program (Chandra-Mouli et al, 2014).

Other landmark work of C3 in generating evidence for building the field on engaging with boys through the Do Kadam Barabari Ki Ore (Two steps towards equality) intervention in Bihar. The project was undertaken to build an understanding of prevalence and acceptance of violence against women and girls with the aim of building community-based interventions to change attitudes, increase accountability and improve redressal mechanisms. The intervention comprised a mix of gender transformative life skills, education and sports-coaching. A cluster randomized trial, involving 15 intervention and 15 control youth clubs, assessed the program's impact. Of 1,149 boys interviewed at baseline, 1,033 were successfully re-interviewed at endline. Initial findings revealed that most boys held attitudes condoning male control and overlooking violence against women. By the conclusion of the program, participants in intervention clubs demonstrated significantly more egalitarian attitudes, rejected violence, and supported shared household responsibilities and girls' rights to education and social

participation. Notably, boys showed shifts in their understanding of masculinity, greater awareness of legal protections for women, and a stronger commitment to non-violence.

C3 supported the 1.8 billion What Young People Want campaign by [PMNCH](#) and collected responses from 132,651 youth across 12 states of India. The international campaign identified the top priorities of the youth as being quality education, skills training, and meaningful employment.

Through collaboration with government and academic partners, C3 transforms evaluation data into actionable policy advocacy, and refining program strategies, which reflects C3's systems oriented model of integrating research into implementation and advocacy. By combining quantitative evidence with qualitative data, C3 works to ensure its gender norms focused work is context-sensitive, evidence-driven, and scalable.



What Works

Several aspects of C3's approach stand out as promising practices for shifting adolescent gender norms. Most significantly, C3 has a systems-oriented and sustainable approach to its program design and implementation.

First, C3 integrates its programs into public systems and collaborates with multiple stakeholder tiers. Cluster coordinators liaise with school principals, frontline health workers, and panchayat leaders, promoting accountability beyond individual-level change. This systemic partnership is considered a core innovation in achieving sustainable gender norm shifts. C3 examines the policy level for enabling environments, and works with a number of actors in order to create change. Examples include:

- In Jharkhand, C3's Udaan program was endorsed by the State Cabinet, enabling its inclusion in the Department of Education's state-planned budget.
- C3 strengthened the SABLA Scheme ([Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls](#)) in seven districts, with intensive work in Gumla, including developing IEC (Information, Communication and Training) materials, training, as well as content focused on adolescent girls' empowerment and education. The Gumla-tested model was adopted for scaling across all seven districts and later mainstreamed within the government's rollout of Tejaswini in the remaining 17 districts.

- C3 supported RKSK implementation in a district (West Singhbhum), leading the Government of Jharkhand to expand RKSK provisions to additional districts. This resulted in strong convergence between two departments to jointly implement programs empowering adolescents and mentioned as the FP2030 vision document.

Second, C3 has a multi-level engagement model. Programs combine adolescent-focused sessions (life skills, SEL, digital literacy) with community sensitization and system coordination, enabling shifts in norms across spheres. Evaluations show girls became more confident to negotiate

education, while coordinators engaged parents and village leaders to enable participation.

Third, C3 does not solely focus on girls, but engages boys in their adolescent programming. C3 believes the burden of societal change should not fall on girls. And therefore, the school-based adolescent educational programming integrates boys in discussions on healthy relationships, gender, gender equity, and gender-based violence.

Overall, aligned with its approach to gender which is anchored in a socioecological model (SEM), C3 is committed to gender norms change through systems change.



Endnote: ¹ [In POCSO judgement, Supreme Court bats for promoting sex education](#)