



WEP Madurai Leadership Academy students pose with their career-focused textbooks.

End of Year Report, 2022

WOMEN'S EDUCATION PROJECT

Dear WEP Supporters,


It has been 20 years since we rented a small house in Madurai - our first Women's Education Project Center - in response to the many young women who asked for scholarships and study space to complete their education and pursue careers.

From that little house, surrounded by a garden, we have grown to over 4,000 alumnae, five NGO partners in five states, and six Leadership Academies, serving over 400 students and alumnae annually. Over the years, working closely with WEP Directors and our students and alumnae, we have built the Leadership Academy. In this locally-sourced holistic program, young women gain self-awareness, confidence, an understanding of how they wish to contribute to the world, and the skills to achieve their ambitions.

When asked about a defining moment while attending the Academy, most students mention how friendships, heart-to-hearts with mentors, praise from teachers, and opportunities to lead a club or speak at a WEP Forum raised their confidence and grew their voices. As a student says in her story (page 30), *"I was also feeling very lonely because I had no friends at my new college, my first impression when I came to [WEP was that] there were many girls ... who were reading books discussing and sharing interesting personal stories, they were laughing, talking, and teasing each other, I felt very happy to being among them I forgot my loneliness."*

So as we start 2023, a year dedicated to the *complexity* of expanding our work to new NGO partners, we know that maintaining *simplicity* is core to WEP. When a young woman finds a space to develop friendships, gain opportunities, and express her opinions, doors open to careers of her own choosing and to understanding how she can create change in her own life, family and community.

In this report, we are happy to share many stories of WEP students, lifting their voices! We wish you the happiest of holidays and New Year!



Zoë Timms
Founder
& Executive Director



Deepika Mandrekar
President



WEP-India



Malini, second from the right, and Kadapa Students.

WEP-India is WEP's partner entity, created to fully comply with India's legal frameworks and enable local fundraising and expansion activities. WEP-India is a registered Trust with its own Board, administrative office and in-country director, Malini Eden. It serves as an important manifestation of WEP's commitment to a grassroots approach prioritizing the growth of local leadership and resources.

While making steady progress toward achieving funding from within India, in 2023 WEP-India will also work to staff the Women's Collaboration Lab, housed within their offices. The Lab supports the grassroots leaders running the Leadership Academies by providing an incubator program, roundtables, a metrics collection framework, and other supports that ensure feedback loops, allowing WEP programs to remain responsive to local needs.

"Millions of young women in India are from disadvantaged communities, denied literacy, basic education, access to healthcare and skills training, denied the right to make a living of their choice. At Leadership Academies they work alongside development practitioners, synergizing a vision of young emergent leadership and guiding students toward becoming 'Influencers' of change. By creating spaces of learning that are relevant to each student's growth, building a 'confluence' of partnerships with various stakeholders, and enabling access to funds, WEP-India builds an identity across the nation and showcases its achievements at the global level."

Malini Eden, WEP-India Director

WEP Leadership Academy Directors

MADURAI, TN



A. Vijayalakshmi, WEP Leadership Academy Director since 2005

HYDERABAD, TE



Esther Subhashini, WEP Leadership Academy Director since 2009

KADAPA, AP



Sandhya Puchalapalli, Founder of Aarti Home, WEP Leadership Academy Director since 2012

INDORE, MP



Shini Ajay Godwin, Principal of School of Nursing, Christian Hospital

We look forward to working with WEP and providing students with the Leadership Academy, because we need to encourage, persuade and give confidence to the nursing students, so they may realise both their full potential and their corporate objectives. - **Shini Ajay Godwin**

WOMENSERVE TEAM, RJ



Lata Raman, WomenServe Country Advisor/Director



Swati Bhardwaj, WomenServe Head of Program Operations



Harsha Vyas, WEP Manager, Leadership Academy

WEP means a lot to me. It's always been my second family. WEP brought out my true inner leadership ability and transformed me into a responsible, committed, and enthusiastic leader. When I saw our WEP girls grow into successful women, I personally felt proud and motivated. When students ventilated their inner feelings and emotions with me, I felt like a mother intimate with them closely and facilitated their finding relief from their sorrows. I wholeheartedly say WEP provides light in my and our students' lives. - **A. Vijayalakshmi**

It has been a tough year for our students. The sudden high costs of transportation, the reduction of buses to the villages, ad hoc closures of colleges, no prior notices for exam dates - planning WEP courses became a guessing game. The lack of food hit the outstation students very hard. They went back home, missing their college classes, sitting for exams online. From October things have improved. The girls and new girls are coming in, showing keen interest in reading books. A surprisingly impromptu book reading in their college leisure time or lunch hour by a WEP student has caught on. The new Satellite students are very keen to learn, and have a thirst to learn. Overall, it has been good, but has had its moments of worry. But to see how the girls are focused and maturing it is good to see that. - **Esther Subhashini**

Leadership Academy is a program of immense impact. In 2022, we have had students go through the program and grow in confidence to take on any challenge that faces them. We have had our students proceed to take on challenging interviews and compete with many urban students who have a far larger exposure and enter the workforce. What is even more important is that the students have grown in their awareness of their social responsibilities through hands-on projects that create a ripple effect in their communities. We are looking forward to building further strength with the WEP Leadership Academy - **Sandhya Puchalapalli**

Program Overview

WEP serves over 400 young women at six Leadership Academies housed by five partner NGOs across India: Centre for World Solidarity in Telangana, Association for Integrated Rural Development in Tamil Nadu, Aarti Home in Andhra Pradesh, WomenServe in Rajasthan and our new partner, Aman NGO in Madhya Pradesh.

Each Leadership Academy curriculum provides:

1. **Safe Space:** a trusted community of peers and mentors for students to become comfortable, with baseline essentials including water, daily nutrition, access to clean toilets and fun social emotional learning games and activities.
2. **Certificates:**
Foundations: leadership, health, rights, safety, budgeting & mindfulness
Skills: communication (local language & English), tech & specialized skills
Exploration: project-based field trips for new experiences & opportunities
Ripple Effect: changemaker series
3. **Next Steps:** scholarships to area colleges & training programs, exam & interview preparation
4. **Alumnae Association:** continued support and access to mentoring & other opportunities

WEP Leadership Academy graduates transcend immense social pressures. They EARN in formal sector careers or entrepreneurial occupations of their own choosing, become self-reliant, informed & skilled LEADERS, and make lasting CHANGE in their lives, families & communities.



2022 Initiatives

RIPPLE EFFECT

Our students have always been changemakers. However during COVID, as our students were meeting with local officials and writing petitions to address serious public health and safety issues, WEP Directors raised the need for specialized training to ensure their safety and effectiveness.

During a three month pilot, funded by a grant from PaxWorks, 18 students learned, through an arts-based approach, about community issues, rights and changemaker tools, before embarking on their own projects and then reuniting to study with traditional storytellers to tell their own stories. (photo, right)

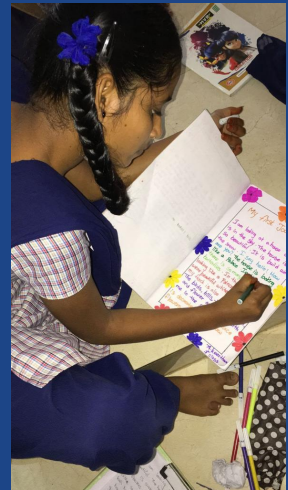
SATELLITES

Learning from our Hyderabad students, whose bus travel became significantly more expensive and difficult during COVID, we identified the need to open satellites in their villages. Esther and Sandhya are each testing our Academy curriculum in rural areas, facilitated by local mentors, all former WEP students. The Kadapa pilot was funded by Ripple Giving Circle.



STORYTELLING

Following an introduction from Vandermark Foundation, WEP and GrubStreet, which supports local writers in Boston, have begun a partnership to offer the students of Aarti Home a four-session course titled "Young Writers Workshop: Introduction to Creative Writing" to learn the art of storytelling and to understand the power of one's own story. The program ends in January.



A few recent student Ripple Effect projects:

- Successfully petitioning a local school to provide 2 new water tanks for drinking water and toilets. (page 30)
- Providing daily tutoring for 45 younger students in a student's village. (page 22)
- Organizing a "She Team" awareness training offered by a local police department at a student's college. (page 22)
- Organizing neighbors & petitioning officials to replace pipes & fix drainage issues in a student's apartment building. (page 23)
- Organizing residents to successfully advocate for better and more nutritious food at a student hostel. (page 29)

Partner Updates

Each WEP Partner interprets the Leadership Academy curriculum framework in their own way. The following pages provide a glimpse of the unique offerings at our six Academies.



Student-led book club at WEP's Leadership Academy in Hyderabad.



Madurai & Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu

Partner: Association for Integrated Rural Development (AIRD)

Vijayalakshmi, a WEP Director since 2005, runs the Leadership Academy in Madurai (at Illaku, a trust she founded in 2020) and oversees a second Academy in Ramanathapuram. Both Academies are run in partnership with AIRD, an NGO working throughout Tamil Nadu.

Academy Enrollment:

- 83 students, Madurai
- 45 students, Ramanathapuram

The following is a sample of 2022 activities, which Vijayalakshmi chose based on the students' interests and to fulfill the Leadership Academy Certificate requirements:

Foundation Certificate: Right to a Bright Life, Women & Society, Rights & the Indian Constitution, Civics, Leadership & Goal Setting, Adolescent Communication & Relationships, Mental Health & Covid, Neuroscience & Happiness, Play-Based Learning, & Leadership Retreat (photo right)

Skills Certificate: Basic Computers, Study Skills, Spoken English, Tally Software (similar to Quickbooks), & Photography and Filmmaking

Students wanting to become accountants requested Tally Software courses and shared at our Forum, "Tally is very important for my career ... WEP provides it to me for free which is wonderful."

Exploration Certificate: 100 acre organic farm NGO visit to learn about traditional agricultural methods, Zafira foods (enterprise) to learn about manufacturing.

Ripple Effect Certificate: Students chose two orphanages, at which they volunteer.

Student-Led Clubs: Peer Support, Language, Book Club, Chess, Storytelling, Finance, Dance, Karate, Yoga, Current Events: NASA & the James Webb Telescope, History of Coins



Hyderabad, Telangana

Partner: Centre For World Solidarity (CWS)

Esther Subhashini, WEP Director since 2009, runs our Leadership Academy in Hyderabad. In response to students having difficulty accessing the Center, Esther opened a satellite in an area village. The Center and Satellite are staffed by three Program Managers (WEP Alumnae) who conduct home visits to build rapport with families, enroll new students, deliver a nutrition program – a special porridge is provided daily to combat malnourishment – and facilitate activities.

Academy Enrollment

- 72 students, Academy Center, Hyderabad (outskirts)
- 15 students, Satellite (village)

The following are a sample of the courses Esther offered to fulfill the Academy's Certificates requirements:

Foundation Certificate: Time Management, Entrepreneurship, Women's Health & Nutrition, Reproductive Health, Occupational Therapy, HIV & TB Awareness, Gender, Culture & Society, Rights, Domestic Violence & Abuse, Emotional Intelligence, Financial Management & Family Budgets, and Special Medical Camps

Skills Certificate: Study Skills, Library Use, Typing, Microsoft Word & Excel, Stress Management & Timelines, Public Speaking & Body Language, and Chicken Rearing

Exploration Certificate: Field trips to the Gram Panchayat office and a bookstore to restock the library

Ripple Effect Certificate: Students taught a workshop on gender & leadership at an area school.

Students-Led Clubs: Reading (15 clubs in 6 villages, colleges, schools & hostels), Cycle, Craft, Kitchen Garden (26 grew nutrition gardens & composted). Daily: Meditation, Newspaper Reading, and Study Groups



Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh

Partner: Aarti Home, Vijaya Foundation Trust

Sandhya Puchalapalli, founder of Aarti Home, a residential home for girls, has been the WEP Director in Kadapa since 2012. Aarti staff enroll students from area villages to live at Aarti and attend the Academy for a four-month program.

Academy Enrollment

- 127 students attended 4 cohorts

The following are a sample of the courses Aarti Home staff offered to fulfill the Academy's Certificates requirements:

Foundation Certificate: Women's Health & Nutrition, History of Indian Cuisine & the Influence of Indian Rulers (on cooking), Cultivation of Grains & Spices, Mindfulness, Leadership Within & Around, Learning from Other Leaders, Decision Making & Problem Solving, Geography, and Environment Sustainability

Skills Certificate: Study Skills, Basic IT, Mentoring, Speech Making, Journalism, Spoken English, Telugu Poetry & Music, DSLR Photography & Videography, Pottery & Terracotta Jewelry, Sustainable Farming & Composting

Exploration Certificate: Area institutions and historical sites

Ripple Effect Certificate: Students held a special event and volunteered to distribute relief material to families affected by Andhra floods.

Students-Led Clubs: Students formed special study and peer support groups including a sister/buddy system.



Bap, Rajasthan

Partner: WomenServe

Harsha Vyas and Swati Bhardwaj manage the Leadership Academy in Bap, Rajasthan in partnership with WomenServe. They enrolled students from area villages to attend two cohorts in four-month increments.

Academy Enrollment:

- 51 students attended 2 cohorts

WomenServe staff arranged for the following courses to fulfill the Academy's Certificates:

Foundation Certificate: Discovering Your Uniqueness & Spark; Emotional Intelligence; Gender, Rights & Justice; Mindfulness; Body Image; Positive Mental Health; Self-Defence; Women's Rights & the Constitution; Finance Management; Health, Nutrition & Hygiene

Skills Certificate: Basic Computers, Library Skills, Beautician Skills, Tailoring, and Crafts

Student-Led Clubs: Book reading was promoted as a regular library activity, as were song and dance sessions, Tiffin parties, Ludo and Carroms.

At their graduation, students presented what they had learned (for many, their first time on stage) and told stories before performing folk dances. One student told the audience how *"she had faced problems after getting married early. After the disdain from her husband, she is living in her maternal house with her daughter but she has no means of earning. The Academy has come as a ray of hope for her, here she has also started studying at Open University and learning computers so that soon she can engage in economic activities and take responsibility of herself and her daughter."*

Another said how *"she depends on her parents for small needs, because her in-laws don't get anything. Joining the Academy, she has learned to sew, and now she earns 200-300 rupees by sewing clothes. She has resumed her studies at Open University, she reads books several times while sitting in the library. She has learned a lot and is feeling great now."*



Indore, Madhya Pradesh

Partner: Aman NGO

WEP has partnered with Aman NGO to open a Leadership Academy at their nursing college in Indore, Madhya Pradesh.

In preparation to start the program, both Deepika Mandrekar, WEP President, and Malini Eden, WEP-India Director, visited to meet some of the 15 nursing students who will attend the Academy, starting in January, 2023.

The students, orphans or semi-orphans from Indore and the city's outskirts, have completed the 12th grade through Aman NGO programs. Once accepted to the nursing college, the students stay at residential facilities for three years on the NGO's campus.

WEP feels fortunate to partner with the Aman NGO, whose staff, resources and connections will provide an excellent foundation for the Academy program.



Deepika Mandrekar, WEP President meet with the teachers of the Nursing College.

Deepika found that despite their interest in pursuing nursing careers, with some even wanting to study further and specialize (a student asked, "I want to be a cardiology nurse, how will WEP help me?"), they lacked confident communication skills. Impressed by their ambition, Deepika left Indore feeling that Aman NGO will be an excellent partner and excited for the students to soon access the Academy's resources.

Alumnae Stories



Three graduates of our Leadership Academy at Aarti Home in Kadapa head to their first jobs at Akasa Air in Mumbai. Sandhya Puchalapalli, Aarti Home Founder, wrote to us, "All of us at Aarti are proud of our girls ... who have been selected after several rounds of interviews ... Truly, the sky is the limit!!"

Having been exposed to the many diverse opportunities of the Leadership Academy, WEP students enter our Next Steps program, where they prepare to confidently interview, take entrance exams, and receive scholarships to colleges and training programs.

Current students are on scholarships in the fields of accounting, veterinary science, hospitality services, nursing, journalism, computer programming, teaching, fine arts, and pharmacology. Others have received funding and training to start fish and chicken farms and other small scale entrepreneurial activities.



Alumnae Careers

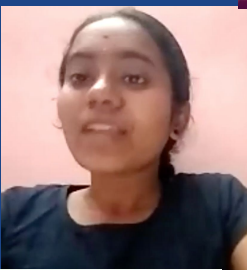
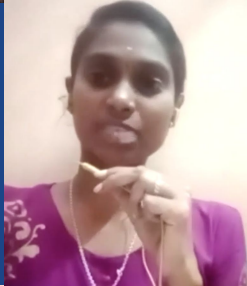
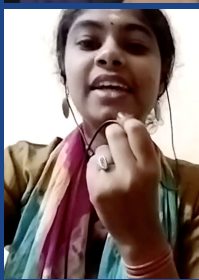
Throughout 2022, WEP Alumnae entered the following occupations.

- Police Corp, Armed Reserve
- Sales Person in Medical shop
- Micro Finance
- Nurse
- Translator
- Entrepreneurs
- Business Development Associate at a School of Banking
- Accounts department
- Tutor for school children
- Accountant
- Customer Relationship Manager
- Cashier
- Junior Accountant
- Technical Assistant at a School
- Airline staff
- Software Engineer
- Client Care Manager
- Textile Showroom Manager Amazon business
- Small-Scale Farmers



Forum & Red Bangle Award

presented annually to a woman who by her life and accomplishment demonstrates the indomitable eloquence of the human spirit.



On December 7, the 9th annual forum was broadcast live to a US and Indian audience. Anita Bhatia of UN Women welcomed participants, noting WEP's role in "bringing agency, hope and choice" to young women and that "our job ... is making sure that we are not only making opportunities for ourselves, but clearing the way for others to be successful as well."

Anjee Prakash, Founder & Chairperson of Learning Links Foundation, presented Sonali Khan, Managing Director of Sesame Workshop India, with the Red Bangle Award, in recognition of two decades of work as a leading human rights advocate. Her advocacy has promoted gender equity in education, the empowerment of adolescent girls, and ending violence against marginalized communities, with an emphasis on girls and women.

Sonali was joined in conversation by Bridgit Antoinette Evans, CEO of Pop Culture Collaborative and a thought leader in the culture change strategy field. Sonali and Bridget engaged in a compelling discussion of "stories..that shaped (their) approach to leadership," emphasizing the need to be radically inclusive, carving out space for their own work while actively inviting the next generation of women leaders and their new voices into the conversation.

Long-time Academy Director A. Vijayalakshmi and five students from WEP's Madurai Academy brought the forum full circle, discussing their own paths to leadership and learning at their Academy and sharing their ambitions to become an accountant, computer programmer, IAS officer, and more.

Watch the forum [HERE](#)

The Connects: donor engagement



The Connects are programs for WEP donors to learn about the issues facing girls and women globally by meeting WEP students (who are paid to participate) and attending discussions, the Annual Forum & Red Bangle Award and other special events.

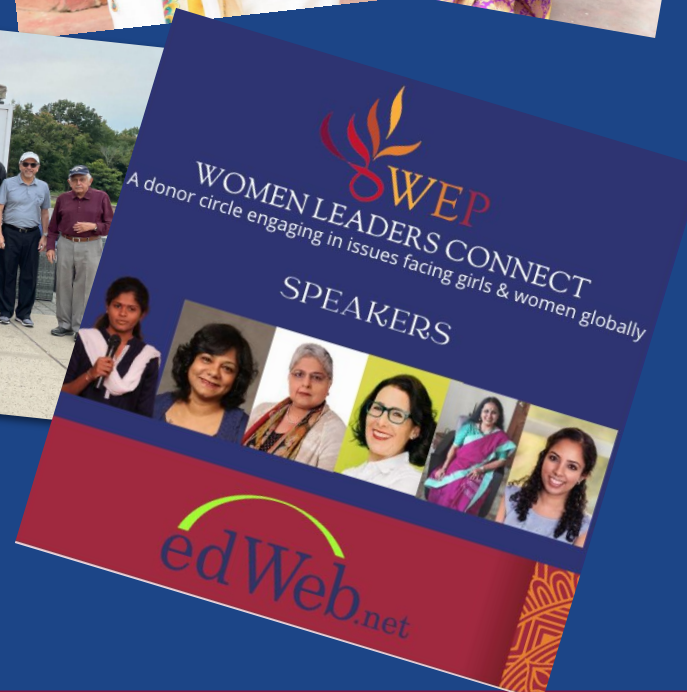
Highlights from 2022 Connects (photos): Corporate employees were guided by Aarti Home students on the many regional methods of sari tying across India.



Golfers in New Jersey met students online before hitting the links for their 8th annual golfing fundraiser.

Women Leaders Connect was launched as a donor circle for women seeking a deeper level of engagement. Members convene (online & in person) at roundtables, ideation sessions and discussions with WEP students and global leaders.

Learn more about The Connects [HERE](#).



Student Stories

The best way to understand our work is to hear from our students, in their own voices. On the following pages, you'll find stories told by students and Directors, sharing their WEP experiences and lives.

Like the recipients of our Red Bangle Award, who *"by (their) life and accomplishment demonstrate the indomitable eloquence of the human spirit, and inspire others to higher goals,"* each of these extraordinarily courageous young women inspire all of us at WEP.

Stories are mostly in the students, or Directors, words, except where edited for clarity. Student names and village locations have been abbreviated to an initial to protect their privacy.



Student Stories



Hi, my name is H. I am doing my B.com final year. My father is a driver. My mother is the high motivator in our life. My grandmother is a caring person always. My aim is to become a chartered accountant. When I was doing my 12th standard, I joined WEP through a direct interview. Before WEP I have the same career dream, but after WEP I find ways to achieve it. Though I am doing a commerce course, the Tally* course at WEP is important for my career. My college studies are helping me to reach my goal, but courses in WEP are helping to enrich the skills needed for my life and career. I did my schooling in my mother tongue (Tamil). I struggled to handle my English subjects during my first year of college. I joined at WEP a Spoken English class, which helped me greatly in my academics. WEP provides us residential training in outside institutions on the topics of my Mind, Body, and Spirit, Gender, and Leadership Spark. WEP's life skill programs taught me how to lead my life in the perfect manner. We are having goal setting program. In this, we planned our career, health, finance, and environment goals and evaluate our goals periodically and make confirmed whether we are moving in the right path or not. In Book Club meetings at WEP academy, we read and review different types of books periodically that enhanced our knowledge.

My father finds it difficult to help financially with our studies. In the underprivileged financial condition of our family, WEP supports us through its scholarship.

I am leading the Financial Club. In every month's meeting, we discuss all types of financial matters. I found my inner leadership skills through my leadership in the Financial club.

If I am not joining WEP I couldn't learn much wonderful information. I can't forget my days with WEP. Through WEP I earned new friends, sisters, and volunteers. Through our volunteer program lots of senior citizens are traveling with me.

*similar to Quickbooks

Student Stories

Told by WEP Director: J. is an enrolled student at WEP. She is from C. village she is doing Dairy Science and she is in her 1st year. She was a very shy and introvert when she joined, but now she is confident, talks to everyone, and enjoys to be with other students. She is confident to speak in English. She runs a book club for the children in her neighbourhood, and trains them to cycle, too. Her father runs a small roadside tire repair shop and keeps J's WEP cycle in good condition so that she can train girls to cycle. She is hardworking and a responsible student and has a clear ambition to become a good Veterinarian. She is the elder daughter and she has 2 younger sisters, and she wants to be a role model for them and she wants to be an inspiration to other Muslim girls in her community.

I am S. studying ECE (Electronics and Communication Engineering) Diploma technical course 1st year. My elder sister M. and me joined in the WEP Center in the month of August 2022, I have been coming to the Center regularly. I have attended some of the trainings Time management, Kitchen gardening, Stress management and Women Health and Nutrition trainings at the Center. This has taught me that we can accomplish bigger results if we maintain our time and which helps us to focus on our goals. I am practicing time management and I found that, I have extra time for studies now and it is also removed the stress factor for me when don't complete my task. After the Horticulture training and with the seeds, I and my sister received at the training, I have planted the seeds now in backyard. I like do all the daily activities at the Center, and spending time at the study/library room to improve my English and communication skills. I am looking forward to learn more through WEP trainings. I know that I will become a better person, as I have seen many of the seniors do.



Student Stories



I am from T. village. I joined WEP in June 2015. After intermediate I went to dental clinic to work as an assistant for a year to help the finances. I came back and I joined degree course to do my BA. I was afraid to speak anybody and I would keep quiet in any group. After joined WEP I took several trainings and went on exposure visits and did community project like social map, survey the herbal and medicinal plants. We did many community projects these help me get over fear of my talking to people. I also prepare a very good social map called "Essential Services for the Citizen" which we did during the lockdown. Then I am a disciplined person and hard working. I took the constable coaching and I gave the exam, but I couldn't get I losted by few marks. I love to draw people and learning those techniques at WEP. I recently attended the horticulture training and ask them some [questions] to the speaker. I was not afraid, I help the girls at the Center specially the new girls who are very shy and afraid to speak. I like to mentor the new girls who are very quiet.



Told by WEP Director: S. has joined us, this year August 2022. She is an orphan and she has lost her parents to sickness. She is from G. village. She has a younger brother and he is looked after by her grandparents. She [stays] with her uncle's family. She joined BZC (Botany, Zoology and Chemistry). She is a very bright, pleasant and smart. She speaks good English as she studied English medium back home. She participates in WEP trainings. Recently we did garden training and she is interested to start a kitchen garden at the house. She runs a book club activity for her peer group [and reads stories] to the girls during the college lunch hour. She does have a few problems, because her uncle and aunt don't allow her to go out anywhere on exposure visit.

Student Stories

Told by WEP Director: 17 years old S. is an excellent degree student from M. village, she is in the 2nd year now, and she is very active, outgoing, a great motivator and mobilizer. She mentors the new girls who come to the Centre and takes impromptu classes for them. She clears their subject [questions] doubts and encourages them, she is a very good sister for all the young new girls who come here. She is been in WEP from Oct'-2021 and she has also taken many trainings [and] has done several outreach community projects.

There was an incident, she was coming to college from her village, the bus stop is at a distance of 20 minutes, out of the way, and one boy was following her daily, for an entire week. One day she turned around and gave him a stern warning that she would report him to the police. That day she asked her college lecturer to conduct a She Team awareness program (from the police department) at the college. Her lecturer was impressed with her request and called local police department. The She Team praised her for handling that kind of the situation very well.

She runs the book club in her village, and gives free tuitions for the neighbouring children. She was selected as one of the 6 students for the Ripple Effect workshop, and composed a song about importance of education. For the Ripple Effect volunteering project, she asked the Principal of her village government school to give if she could take tuitions for the 8th, 9th and 10th class students, from the month of July onwards. She is been taking tuitions in all the subjects for 45 students from 5 to 6 pm.

She has a very bright future in front of her and she wants to become an accountant and her character of helping everyone from every walk of life is commendable.



Student Stories



Hi, my name is D. I am doing my first-year B.Com CA at S. College for women. My family consists of seven members. We are living in the village of T. My father and mother are working as [laborers]. Through my college, I came to know about WEP. When I visited for the first time I felt wonder about this place. Here all people are very cool and friendly. We have a lot of books in our library to study. My father and mother are encouraging me to achieve my goal. WEP helped me to find the means to achieve that goal.

Told by WEP Director: N. is one of the earlier students from the urban center, a very bubbly and active and a strong leader, she is in B. Com Degree final year now, to help her family financially, she is working part-time and studying and stays in a city hostel.

She is courageous and a very good speaker, motivator and excellent mentor and able to find out and help girls who have problems. She is very quick to access the situation and deal with it correctly, she can mobilize the whole colony to take up different projects, she is the very thoughtful planner and a good volunteer.

Recently for the Ripple Effect project she took up a drainage issue in her building. She coordinated with her colony members and block officials and she saw that the new drainage pipes were brought and the whole drain pipe line was repaired, so now there is no cesspool of mosquitoes and flies, so children can play without falling into the sewage water. She does have some health issues and weaknesses which she is addressing. She is planning to take up Python and Data Science in private institutions, so that she has a better future and career after she finishes her B.Com.

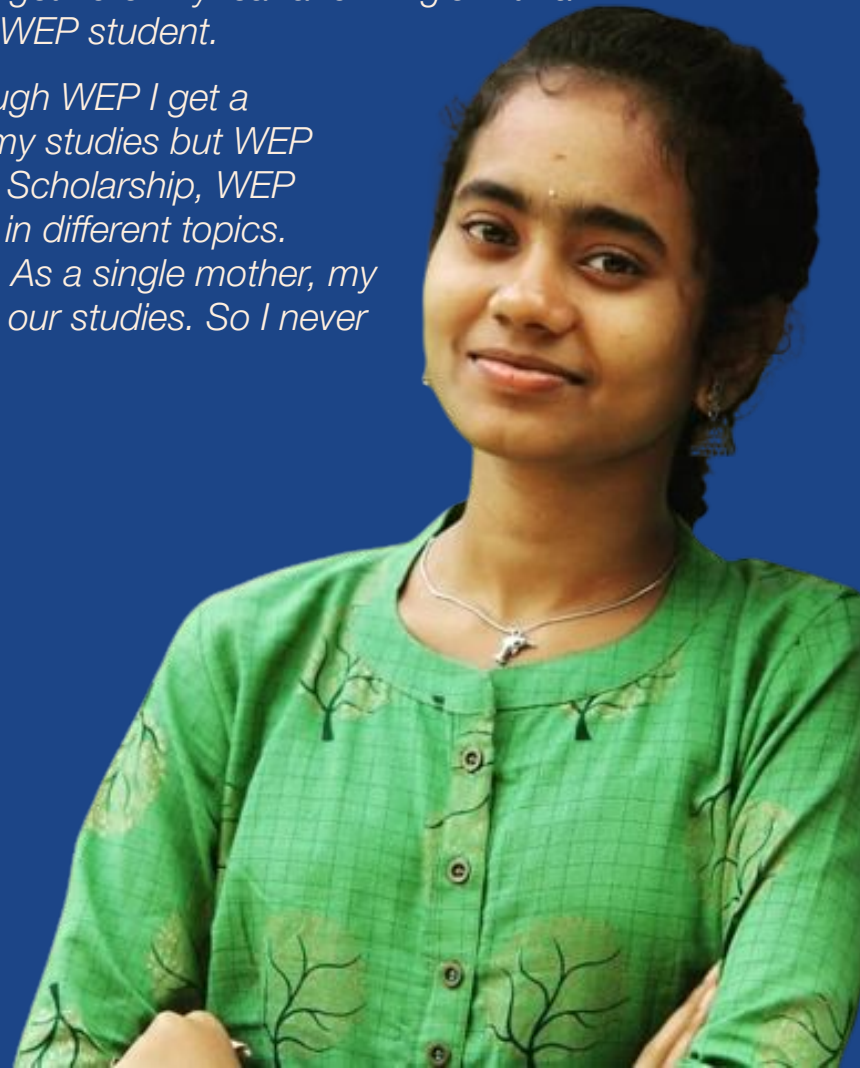


Student Stories

Hi my name is P. I am doing my third-year B.Com in Y. Women's College. During my 12th Standard holidays, I joined WEP. Initially, I never believed that I can join as a student here. But luckily I was selected here as a student. During my schooling, all my classmates went to tuition to strengthen their academic knowledge, but due to family financial conditions I couldn't go to tuition, and also I couldn't select my desired course in college. But after I joined I get a lot of wonderful friends. Initially, I found new everything in WEP. It took time to get rid of my fear and mingle with all. I learned a lot of good things at WEP than at College. I feel proud to be a WEP student.

In my College, I couldn't learn life skills but at WEP academy I can. Through WEP I get a scholarship for my studies. Even my relatives neglected me to support my studies but WEP adopted me as its child and helped me in so many ways. Along with the Scholarship, WEP supported me to train in Life skills, Defense skills, and residential training in different topics. Through WEP support, I am sharing my mother's burden for my studies. As a single mother, my mother's very less salary wouldn't able to support me and my siblings in our studies. So I never missed not a single training in WEP and get benefitted.

Hi, my name is M. I am doing my BA in English first year at College. My family consists of five members. We are living in the village of U. My Father is a farmer. My mother is working as a [laborer]. I came to know about WEP through my college. I want to become a teacher. But my mother wants me to become the police. For achieving my career goal finance is the major threat in my life. I want to concentrate on my studies without any hurdles. Sure I will focus on my goal. I felt happy to be part of WEP now. I am learning self-defense skills. I am planning my study hours and executing them by using WEP resources.



Student Stories

As told by WEP Director: J. is studying intermediate 1st year Bipc (Biology, Physics, Chemistry). She is an avid reader, and reads many many story books in the Ushassu study/library room. She also spends time reading her subject books. In a week, she takes books home and she keeps reading too. She has become so interested in reading now that she has started a bookclub in the lunch time in her college for her peer group.

She is the only child of her parents and she wants to become a gynaecologist because her mother became a very critical when she was pregnant again and lost her baby. Since the family went through such trauma where her mother almost lost her life, she wants to become a doctor, and save other women lives. She is very regular to the WEP Center. She takes part in reading - comprehension, daily activities, voice training, newspaper reading and enacting skits. She has a bright future ahead of her as she is a very focused and has a long term values. She has good mentor qualities. She will become a good leader and a community volunteer.

Hi, my name is K. I am doing my first year of BA English at College. My family consists of four members myself, my father, my grandmother, and my grandfather. My mother died during my childhood. During my 12th standard, my brother also died. My father is working as [laborer] in Agriculture. My father always encourages me to study well. He is a good motivator for my studies. My family is struggling to support my studies. Sometimes my father told me he found it very difficult to pay my fees. When I shared my deprived condition with my college, they told me about WEP support. So I decided to come to WEP for my study support. When I visited WEP I found hope for my future. I want to become a teacher. Without any diversion, I will focus on my studies. I attend Self Defense classes, which would be beneficial to me in my life. I felt happy to get a good friend at WEP.



Student Stories



During my first year of college, I came to know about WEP through my well-wisher [teacher] Then I came to Ms. Vijayalakshmi and explained about my family condition and my aspiration towards Education. She appreciated me and enrolled me as a student in WEP. My mother supported me in my school education. But she struggled to support my college studies, So WEP scholarship was helping me in my studies. Also in our organization, they provided me with Spoken English, Basic Tally, and DTP which helped me in my career. As I want to become a Web Developer in an IT company, these skills would help me a lot in my career. We are having a goal-setting program in our Center. That helped me to evaluate myself periodically to move towards my goal. We are framing 25 hours of study hours per month and executing them periodically. On weekends at WEP we are having self-defense classes like Yoga and Karate, which are helping us to develop our self-defense skills. We are having our club meetings monthly. We are also learning life skills. It is not an Organization, It's our family.



Student Stories



Hi, I am I. I am doing my first year of BBA at M. College for women. I want to become an IAS (Indian Administrative Officer). I will plan sure and implement it. At WEP I did my Basic Computer course. Before that course, I never touch a computer and don't know how to operate it. Now I am confident to operate the computer. In my life, I missed a lot of my opportunities, but hereafter I never miss any of my opportunities. WEP academy directs me on the right path. I received a scholarship from WEP for my college studies. Due to my family condition, I couldn't learn a lot of skills. But WEP provides me with all skills to develop myself. Through WEP's self-defense classes, I feel confident in my life.

My weaknesses are stage fear, finance, and lack of skills. WEP is the opportunity for me to eradicate those weaknesses and build myself very strong. I feel very shy to talk with people after WEP now I feel very confident to communicate with others. WEP provides equal opportunities to all of its students, and that is why I feel happy to be a student of the WEP. I want to improve my standard of living. As I said earlier I am not going to miss my opportunities, sure I will succeed in my goal.

My family never motivated and supported me in my life. But WEP motivates me in all ways. I have a lot of pain in my heart through bitter experiences with my relatives. Sure I will overcome those pain and sorrows and succeed in my life. WEP creates all the hope in my life. Thanks for giving me this opportunity to write about myself.



Student Stories



Hi, my name is M. I am doing my first year of BA English at a College for women. My family consists of six members my father, my mother, my brother, my grandfather, my grandmother, and myself. We all are living in a village called C. I like my parents very much. I want to become the Police. My parents also want me to become a police officer. My family's condition couldn't support my studies. That's why I depend on WEP for my Education and Career. WEP is a good opportunity in my life. My mother and father are Agriculture workers. Through my college, I came to know about WEP.



Hi, I am Y. My mother always takes care of me very well. My father is a driver. During my schooling, I joined WEP. I really have the motivation to succeed in my life. WEP teaches me to use opportunities and how to keep those opportunities sustainable. [Here, I gain] my self-confidence and eradicate my stage fear through its life skill classes. My father finds it difficult to support us financially for our education. WEP provides me with a scholarship to continue my studies without any hurdles. Even if WEP rejected to give a scholarship in the future, I will come for its life skill and other classes sure. We are learning costly courses like Karate, Yoga, and TNPSC classes at free of cost. Here, the teaching of each course is very simple to understand.



Student Stories

Told by WEP Director: K. joined the Hyderabad Leadership Academy in the month of August. She is an orphan from G. village, AP. Even though tragedy has hit her, she is very active and smart, she is currently studying in final year degree college. She has previously studied in an English medium school. She [enjoys the courses and learns well] and has been selected to help in WEP's curriculum development.

Told by WEP Director: R. is alumnae of WEP Ushassu, studying MSC 2nd year. She is staying at a Hostel in C. Village. Her hometown is Warangal. She joined WEP in 2017 she took all the trainings in WEP, because of that she was able to mobilise her hostel students to ask for the food to be given correctly and to improve the quality of the food. She is waiting for her MSC (statistics) 2nd year examination results, she comes often to visit our Leadership Academy. She has applied for a WEP Next Steps scholarship.



Hi, I am R. I am doing my final year B.Com at a women's college. My father is a tea master. My mother is a housewife. My brother is doing 7th standard in a government school. As I am a commerce student, the Tally course is very important for my career. The Tally course is very costly in outside institutions. But WEP provides us free tally course, which is very much useful for me in my career. Not only Tally course WEP conducts a lot of courses like Basic Computer, Computer Languages, Spoken English, and Basic and advanced Tally courses. WEP provides me with a scholarship that helps me to continue my studies. When I get a job, I will support my brother to study. On weekends we are having Yoga and Karate Classes. Yoga helps us to relieve our stress and Karate classes give us self-defense skills. WEP also provides residential training courses in Mind, Body, and Spirit, Gender, and Leadership.



Student Stories

I am P. from M. village, I am studying MLT (Medical Lab Technician) 2nd year. I met Program Assistants Shirisha, Rajitha and Radhika near my college gate and they told me about the WEP - Center I went and saw the Center, and felt that it would help me to grow and I joined July 2021.

I was also feeling very lonely because I had no friends at my new college, my first impression when I came to the Center there were many girls in my age group, who were reading books discussing and sharing interesting personal stories, they were laughing talking, and teasing each other, I felt very happy to being among them I forgot my loneliness. I also was very surprised that these girls come from different colleges.

I started attending and participating in several trainings like Health, Gender, Environment, Study Skills, Financial Management, fish farming and kitchen gardening. These trainings were unlike any other college course in my life. These trainings helped me to handle many issues like stress management which helped me to handle my fears and stress during exams and when attended the medical camp that help my course that I am doing a Lab Technician. I have developed very good habits like reading, and writing stories, regular news paper reading, drawing, speaking English.

With all these activities, I was able to attain the 2nd rank in my class in the 1st year, my lecturers are very happy with me. And my parents are very proud and encourage me. My father is a daily wage worker, and my mother is daily wage worker at a function hall.

[We] took up a community project and gave a petition to the Principal and Chairman regarding drinking water and water for the toilets in the school. They sanctioned 2 water tanks for the government school. This has really helped the children of the school to have water during lunch time for drinking and in the toilets, this has reduced the dropouts of girls and absentee numbers. After hearing of this project, Dr. R. (board member of partner organization) visited us at the Center, she gifted me with a smartphone to do my work more effectively.





We could not do this work without the generous support of our many corporate, foundation and individual donors in the US & India.
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We receive vital funding from our Connects program activities. We thank all participants for their enthusiastic support and engagement, especially the founding members of our new Women Leaders Connect and our Corporate Connect Partners.

Women Leaders Connect

Katherine Clark

Deb deVries

Nalini Dhar

Kathy Hurley

Deepika Mandrekar

Anjee Prakash

Lisa Schmucki

Marsha Wallace

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