

# ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

Buzz India

ಹಿರಿಯರ ಮತ್ತು ಮಧ್ಯ ನಾಂದಿ ಮತ್ತು  
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“The training has given me confidence. I had a dream and the training helped me achieve it. I’m happy that I can run a business and take care of my family”.

-Sujatha, Umloo village, Kolar district, Karnataka (South India)

## Transforming attitudes towards poverty

Every time I visit the villages to see Buzz in action and talk to the rural women, I get reenergized and have a smile plastered on my face on my drive back. When Chandamma of Umloo village says, “I am convinced after the Buzz training that it’s all in my hands, I can change my life for the better”, I heave a sigh filled with pride. I was pleasantly aghast at the audacity when Devamma recently told me that she wants to start a bank for her village women. I guess we are doing something right!

True freedom can only come from the confidence that you can handle anything, no matter how bad things get in life. When you know you can handle the worst that life can throw at you, you are free!

And financial freedom is integral to overall freedom. True financial freedom comes from not only having the confidence and knowledge to work your way up from any situation but having the knowledge and tools to stay there. Being able to say, “No matter what, I know I will prevail. It won’t be easy, but I can handle it. Even in an entirely new situation, I will learn my way out of it and get back to financial strength.”

The women Buzz touches have convinced me that they are frontline change agents who are taking charge of their lives and also the village economy. Their increased savings, moving into the formal banking sector, starting new businesses are all testimonials to this conviction. But they want more. They are demanding now that Buzz gives them more opportunities to start business that can link to businesses in the city.

Going forward, Buzz India has to move a step ahead from the leadership intervention that we provide now. We need to become the intermediaries between the business world who are looking for untapped talent in villages and the women who are raring to start new ventures. The Buzz dream is to become the voice of the village women in corporate boardrooms.

**Uthara Narayanan**

Chief Changemaker, Buzz India

# Buzz India: Why, What, How, Where

*Buzz India offers a customized leadership program (financial literacy, entrepreneurship and personal growth) through a bus that goes into villages to deliver its program to rural women at their doorstep.*

## Why

Buzz India's on-field research has shown that one of the primary causes of poverty in rural Karnataka is financial mismanagement. Women lack financial literacy and have very poor to non-existent saving habits. Women who manage household finances pay little attention to their spending habits; they cannot account for their expenses and therefore have no awareness about unnecessary expenditure. Women who earn some income from daily wages or micro-scale enterprises lack basic financial knowledge related to daily money management, profit and savings. This has led to increased dependence on private money lenders which keeps them trapped in the cycle of poverty.

Buzz India believes that improving financial literacy among rural women will help them address these challenges by changing their behaviour towards money. Paying attention to their finances and developing the habit of saving, makes them confident of becoming self-reliant and pursuing their dreams.

It reduces their dependence on private money lenders. They learn to access formal financial institutions for support. Slowly but surely, they transform their lives and the lives of their families which positively impacts their community.

## What

Buzz India delivers its leadership program (financial literacy, entrepreneurship and personal growth) to rural women in the villages of Karnataka. The program targets women at the base of the pyramid and:

- introduces them to book-keeping and the concept of saving
- encourages them to increase their savings with better methods of daily money management
- trains them in goal-setting and marketing
- equips them to become self-sufficient entrepreneurs
- minimizes their dependence on money lenders





The mobile program is delivered to women at their doorstep through a travelling bus. In their journey towards self-reliance, the women face three primary challenges:

1. Lack of opportunity: No customized learning programs that teach personal development and entrepreneurship relevant to their context.
2. Lack of access: Women need to travel long distances to access educational programs which are cost prohibitive and time intensive.
3. Lack of affordable programs on financial literacy and entrepreneurship.

The Buzz program addresses all these challenges.

## How

Buzz India's mobile academy offers simple, relevant financial literacy, entrepreneurship and personal growth training to rural women. The training is delivered from a bus that goes into villages to conduct sessions for the women at their doorstep, addressing the challenges of opportunity, accessibility and affordability. Powered by solar panels on its roof, the bus is equipped with a projector, an audio system, a foldable canopy and chairs. The travelling classroom provides an interactive platform where women learn about financial management and entrepreneurship through training modules, peer interactions, role plays and games.

The program includes modules on communication, book-keeping, daily money management, debt management, goal setting and savings and is designed to engage both the literate and the illiterate population. The program is delivered in two 3-hour sessions with a week's gap in between the first and the second session.

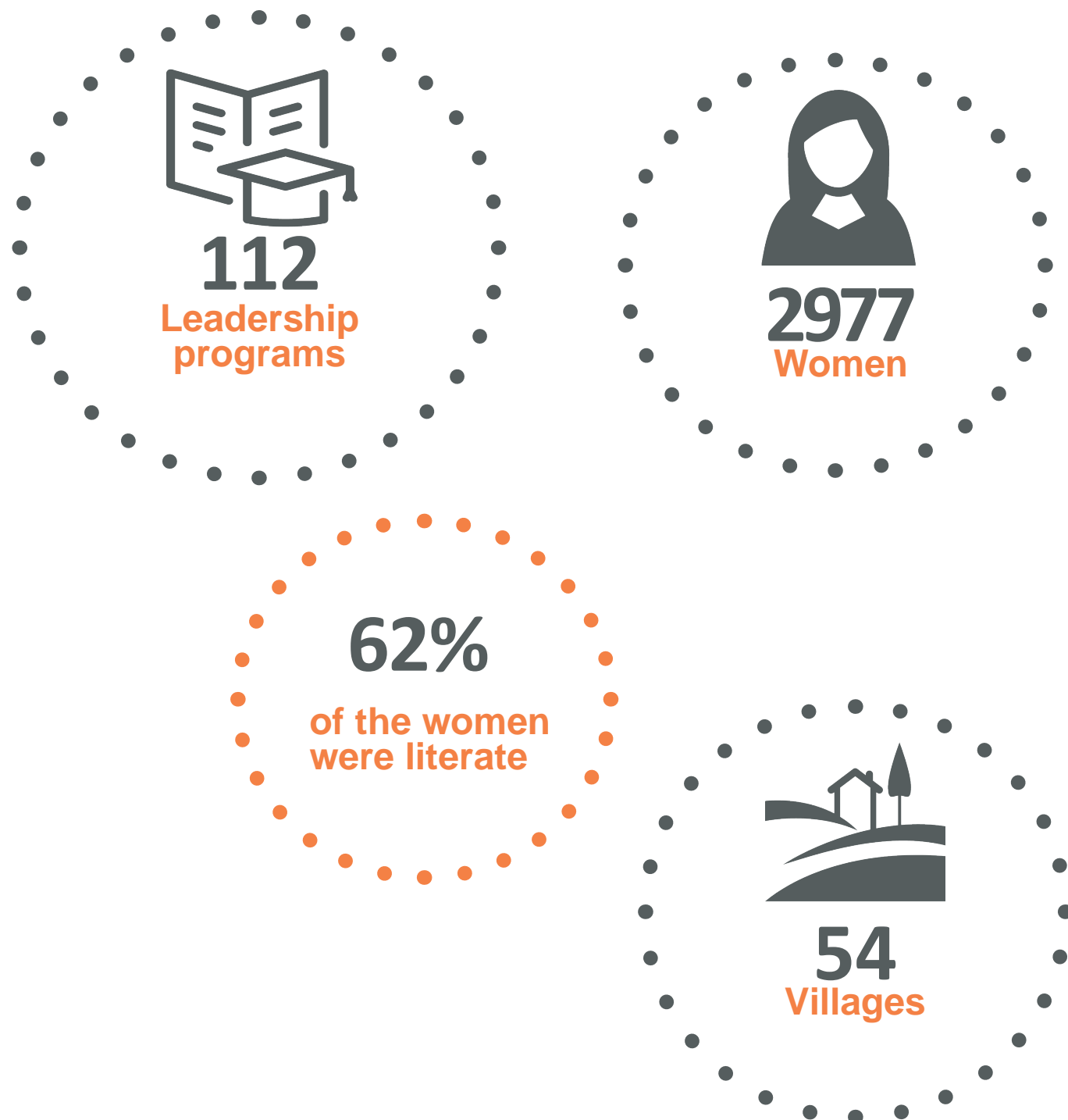
During the week, the women get time to enrol their family into the idea of better financial discipline and apply the tools they learnt in the first session so they can see a measurable impact on their finances. 90% of the women return for the second session.

## Where

In 2014, Buzz India covered 54 villages in Tumkur and Kolar districts in the southern Indian state of Karnataka. Tumkur and Kolar are roughly a 90-minute drive from Bengaluru, the capital city of Karnataka. The population included homemakers, daily wage workers, agricultural labourers and micro-scale entrepreneurs (tailoring, neighbourhood grocery stores, dairy farming, sericulture, poultry farming, vegetable vending etc).

The women were between 18 and 50 years old. Buzz India's dream is to equip rural women with the skills, information and tools to realize their dreams and thus transform their lives and their communities.

## The Buzz Journey in FY14\*



In 2014, Buzz India delivered 112 sessions of its leadership program (financial literacy, entrepreneurship and personal growth) to 2977 women in 54 villages in the southern Indian state of Karnataka; 62% of women were literate and 38% illiterate.

\* Apr 2014- Mar 2015

## Impact of the training

We conducted a survey on 10% of the trained population, to assess the impact of the training.



of women were able to articulate for the first time their income, savings and profit



maintain a book of accounts



of the women who previously ran a small enterprise, started a second enterprise



moved away from private money lenders



became first-time entrepreneurs



increased their savings by over 50%



expanded their existing business

# Highlights - FY14

## Buzz Africa

Within 2.5 years of buzzing in India, Buzz is looking to expand its reach to Africa. Uthara Narayanan, Chief Changemaker, Buzz India, and Dave Jongeneelen, Founder, Buzz Foundation Netherlands, conducted a needs assessment study on the ground in Kenya along with the on-ground partner Rafiki in August 2014. The objective was to understand how the program can be custom designed to meet local needs. After extensive dialogue, the community members unanimously acknowledged that they need a financial capability building program to help them manage their money better.

The study revealed that the Buzz program can be implemented as is, because the African context is very similar to the Indian context. People at the base of the pyramid, who will be Buzz's target group, face similar challenges and constraints as in India. Given that all the lessons learnt during the pilot and after in India, have been incorporated into the current program, it was concluded that the Buzz program in its current form is ready for implementation in Africa. Uthara revisited Kenya in November 2014 to work with Rafiki on implementation details.

She trained the trainers who will deliver the program to the communities, identified the area of operations along with the Rafiki team, and gave them input on the design of the bus. Buzz will launch its Africa operations shortly.

## Another bus, another district

After testing its pilot project model for a year, Buzz found it very well received by the women. The model also generated great curiosity and interest because of its innovative approach to financial literacy and capability building. More women began asking for the program that would come to their doorstep and transform their financial habits. Buoyed by the success, Buzz added its second bus in FY14, helping to extend the program's reach to a larger number of women over a larger geography. The second bus began operations in a new district (province), Tumkur, in the southern Indian state of Karnataka.





## Citi Foundation grant

In FY14, Citi launched its Innovation Grant Program to encourage not-for-profit organizations to develop “innovative financial education and capability programs that expand financial inclusion”. Buzz India’s project was one of seven projects that were approved for the introductory grant. The approval was subject to a rigorous review process by the Citi Foundation. The grant helped Buzz expand its footprint into an additional district.

## Buzz Friends

Buzz piloted the first component of its Community Engagement Plan in FY14 by appointing 5 **Buzz Friends**, women who have undergone the Buzz training program and are residents of centrally located villages with at least 4 villages that are equidistant from them over a radius not exceeding 5 km. These goodwill ambassadors visited up to a maximum of 200 women within this radius. Buzz Friends were equipped with a kit containing a register, a brief on how to maintain records and gather feedback, and a sample questionnaire. The women made house calls to engage one-on-one

with community members. Buzz Friends motivated the women to apply, in their daily lives, the financial principles they learnt at the Buzz training program; shared success stories; provided relevant new information such as new services introduced by local banks. They were equipped with this information by Buzz India.

## Woman power in rural India

8 March is known the world over as International Women’s Day, a perfect opportunity to celebrate the women of Buzz who have embraced the program and used it to transform their lives. In Maluru, a small sub-province in Kolar, Karnataka, nearly 250 women gathered to participate in a local Women’s Day event. The event was organized, managed and hosted from start to finish by the Buzz Friends. Initially, curiosity and excitement at meeting their friends brought them to the event. As the event unfolded, woman after woman stood up and shared her success story of how the Buzz program had opened her eyes to new possibilities. The heartwarming, simple tales told with new-found confidence moved the

audience to tears of joy and accomplishment. They also emphatically endorsed Buzz India's philosophy: poverty alleviation doesn't lie in giving money and material to people; it lies in giving them better tools to manage money and a platform to explore their strengths, their challenges and design their own solutions; it lies in helping them identify their own journey and the road they wish to take to reach their destination. On 8 March 2015, Buzz celebrated the internal journeys of transformation that women committed to and undertook, to reshape their lives.

## Uthara Narayanan selected for Acumen Fellowship

Uthara has been selected as an Acumen India Fellow for 2015. Hundreds of social entrepreneurs from all over the country apply for the prestigious Fellowship each year. They undergo a grueling selection process to be accepted into the program. A list of 20 finalists from across India are chosen for leadership development over a year. They "receive the tools, training and space to innovate new ideas, accelerate their impact, build a strong network of social leaders from across their region and around the world."





“Buzz India opened my eyes to many possibilities, showed me my strengths and helped me assess the risks I could take. I opened my own boutique and a beauty parlor after (the training). I am much more confident about running an establishment.”

- Shobha, Malavalli village, Mandya district, Karnataka (South India)

## Partners



### Buzz Foundation, the Netherlands

Buzz Foundation, Netherlands, is a not-for-profit organization which believes that “leadership” should not be restricted to the corporate or political sectors. Driven by their belief that inside every human being, is a leader waiting to be unleashed, the Buzz Foundation has funded Buzz India since its inception in 2012 and helped reach the leadership journeys to nearly 5000 women at the base of the pyramid in rural India.

In FY14, Buzz Foundation, Netherlands, funded Buzz India’s second bus and financially supported Buzz India’s project in the first two quarters of FY14.

## Citi Foundation



### Citi Foundation

Citi is one of the earliest financial sector institutions in India to invest in social projects that promote empowerment of the economically disadvantaged sections. Since 1999, programs funded by the Citi Foundation have favourably impacted more than 1.65 million people in India. The programs range from enterprise development and financial education to youth education and microfinance.

Citi Foundation’s grant in FY14 helped Buzz India deliver its leadership program to 2977 women in 54 villages in the southern Indian state of Karnataka.





## Grameen Koota Financial Services Pvt. Ltd

GKFSPL is a registered non-banking financial company actively engaged in the microfinance sector (NBFC-MFI). GKFSPL provides financial assistance and non-financial services to the rural poor and low income households, particularly women. The women must be enrolled as members of GKFSPL to avail its services.

In FY14, Buzz India delivered its financial literacy and entrepreneurship program to 247 women members of GKFSPL.

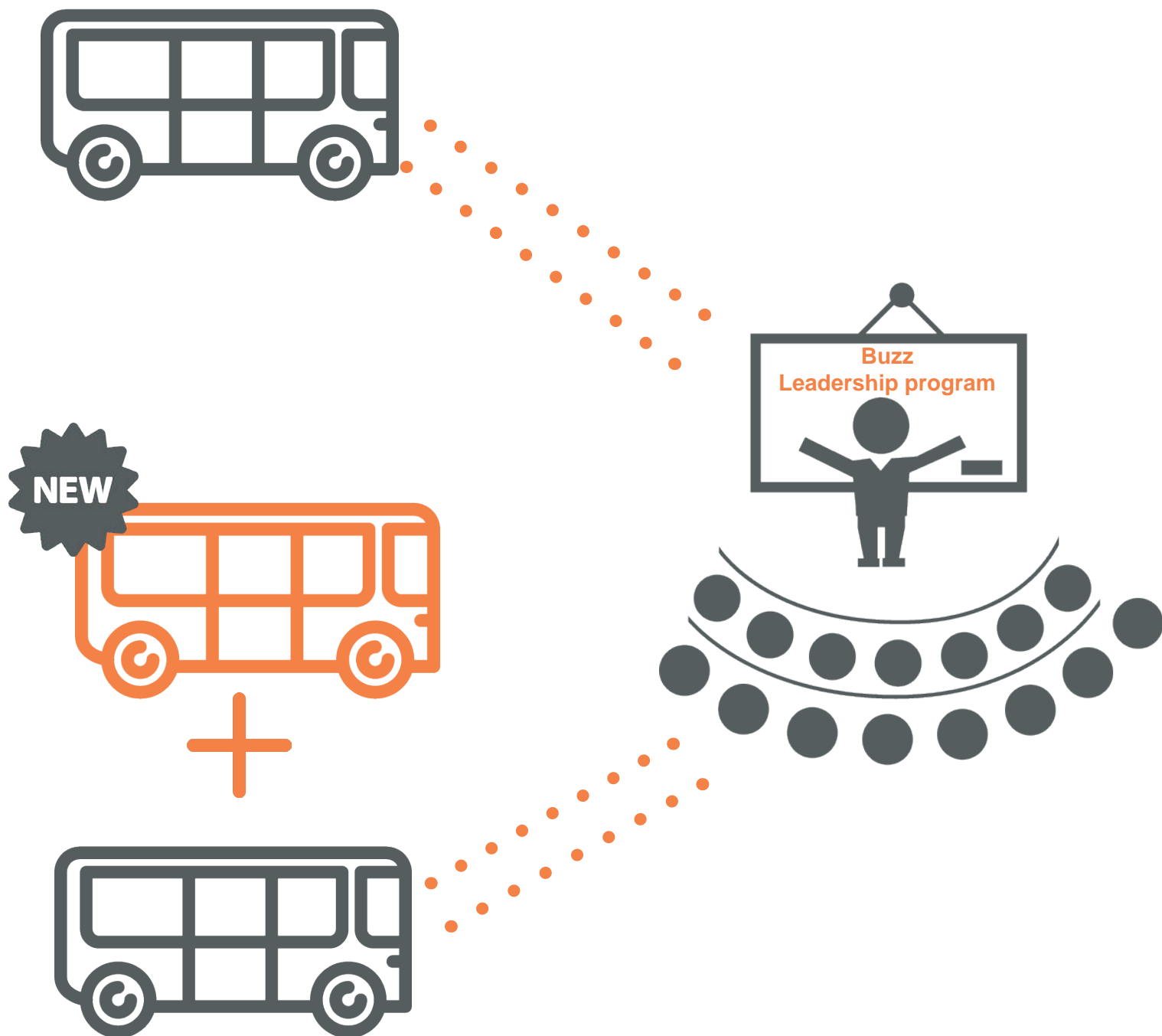
## Department of Women and Child Development, Kolar district

The department launched the Stree Shakthi (Woman Power) program in 2000-01 to make rural women self-reliant. Stree Shakthi comprises self-help groups (SHG) who come together to improve their economic condition on the principles of thrift and credit. One SHG comprises 15-20 members.

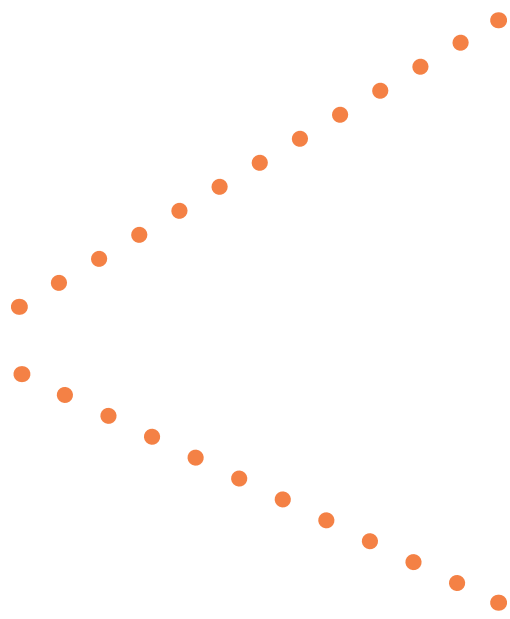
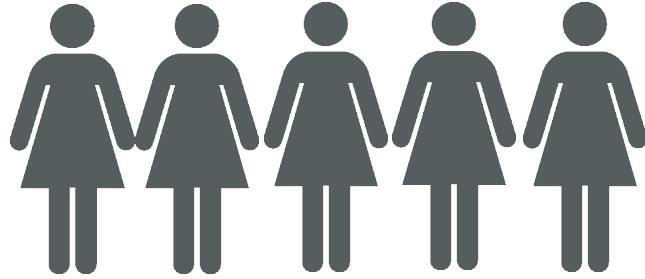
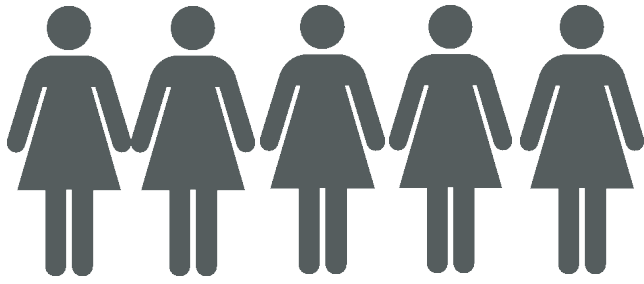
In FY14, the Department authorized Buzz India to train the Stree Shakthi groups. Buzz India delivered its leadership program to **2730** women in the Stree Shakthi program.



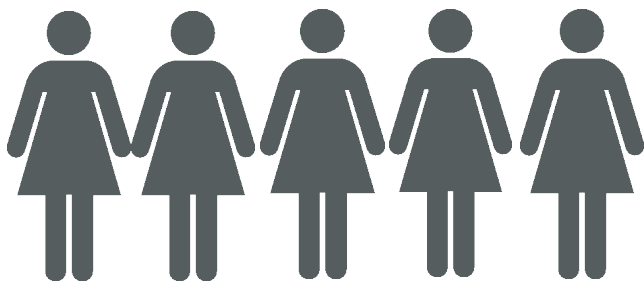
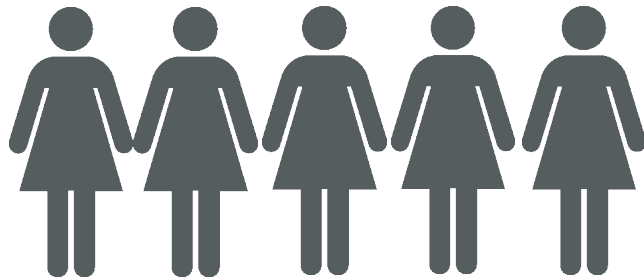
## The road ahead: FY 2015



In 2015, Buzz India plans to reach 8,000 women in Tumkur and Kolar districts. We will achieve this with the existing 2 buses and add 1 new bus in one new district by the end of the year. By 2020, Buzz India's goal is to have equipped 100,000 women with the knowledge and skills to combat poverty.



**8000 women**



In addition to the Buzz training, we will introduce Buzz Plus to women who are interested in starting a business but do not know the “how-what-where”. Buzz will liaise with social enterprises and the corporate sector to identify Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) to provide linkages in the villages. The idea is to establish a revenue generating model to make Buzz sustainable.

## Financials

Buzz project fund utilization details for the 2014-15				
Recepts	Amount	Payments	Amount	Amount
Opening Balance	638,863	Buzz Project Expenses		2,965,055
Grants Received -Buzz	765,833	Overheads Expenses	168546	
Grants Received -Citi	2,995,521	Training program expenses	312897	
		Staff Salaries	1179684	
		Staff travel & stay	206400	
		Assets purchased	1097528	
		Unutilized amount		1,435,162
<b>Total</b>	<b>4400217</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>4400217</b>	



