



## Educate Girls: Improving the Quality and Outcomes of Girls' Learning

By using community mobilization strategies and girl-centric learning, this social enterprise transforms government schools for girls' education in rural India

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# Educate Girls: Improving the Quality and Outcomes of Girls' Learning

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# Summary

In India, women and girls, especially in rural areas, are particularly affected by illiteracy. Estimates show that on an average, a girl in India receives less than four years of education in her lifetime. As a result, India is home to the largest number of illiterate women in the world—more than 200 million (UNESCO 2014).

In Rajasthan, the northwestern Indian state that borders Pakistan, 9 out of 26 districts have the worst gender gap in India for girls' education: only 50% of women can read or write; 40% of girls leave school before they reach grade 5; only 1% of girls reaches class 12; and 50% of girls are married under the legal age of 18 (Educate Girls 2013).

The social enterprise Educate Girls works to reform the existing school framework and create community ownership of government schools to improve Indian girls' enrollment, retention, and academic performance. As of Fiscal Year 2017–18, Educate Girls operates in 10 districts in Rajasthan and 3 districts in Madhya Pradesh benefiting approximately 3.8 million beneficiaries.

Educate Girls creates community ownership of government schools by leveraging existing public, private, and community resources to empower the local communities. The model's main objectives are to enlist village-based youth leaders as champions of girls' education; train school committees in reducing gender disparity in the school infrastructure; train government teachers in a child-centric, creative learning approach to improve academic performance; and promote girls' leadership and life skills by forming Girls' Councils.

The Educate Girls model allows for sending one girl to school at USD 5 per year. Its monitoring and evaluation system measures enrollment, attendance, and quality of learning for these girls, even at a large scale. The program's impact is assessed through rigorous evaluation techniques, including quasi-experimental designs and randomized control trials. Results to date include enrolling over 90% of targeted girls, retaining 85% of the girls enrolled, and an increase of 25–40 percent in learning outcomes across coursework in Hindi, English, and Math. Educate Girls' goal is to improve the access and quality of education for three million children by 2018.

They plan to expand into six new districts with educational challenges between 2017–19. The program is grant-dependent, raising funds from individuals, organizations, institutions, government, and community-based programs. This wide range of sources provides a mix of one-time payments from individuals to multi-year commitments from donors.

Engagement in school governance helps ensure collective action that is sustainable, as well as accountability for teachers and improvements or upkeep in infrastructure. However, constraints include the unavailability of timely support, shortage of female teachers, and difficulty in introducing new teaching techniques. Plus, as the intervention scales up, increased investments would be needed, especially to address social and cultural barriers.

The Educate Girls model has the potential for far-reaching benefits—continuing to address gender inequality in education can bring about real transformation, such as improvements in health, income levels, and overall livelihoods in rural populations.

# Challenge

## Gender Inequality in Education in India

On average, a girl in India receives less than four years of education in her lifetime. As a result, India is home to the largest number of illiterate women in the world (over 200 million) with over 3 million eligible yet out-of-school girls (UNESCO 2014). The definition of “out-of-school” encompasses a wide range of realities and refers to children who do not have access to a school in their community, do not enroll despite the availability of a school, enroll but do not attend school, or drop out of the education system (Global Partnership).

India has committed to provide free and compulsory education for all children ages 6–14 through the Right to Education Act of 2009. It has also made progress toward universalizing access to education over the past 15 years, first through the District Primary Education Program and later through its successor, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

However, across India, particularly in rural populations, the education of girls remains a challenge. The national average shows that only one woman for every two men receive an education (Educate Girls 2013). This directly correlates to dropout rates—for every 100 girls in rural India, only one reaches class 12.

## Girls’ Education in Rajasthan: Gender Gap Epicenter

The National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level has identified blocks with a female literacy rate below 46 percent and a gender gap higher than 23 percent as “Educationally Backward Blocks.” Nine of the 26 most educationally backward districts in India are in Rajasthan. In rural areas, only 40 percent of girls complete class 5 and only 1 percent reaches class 12 (Figure 1).

To address this issue, the government of Rajasthan launched two education programs: Lok Jumbish (1992–2003) and Shiksha Karmi (1987–2003). Lok Jumbish sought to mobilize people and placed special emphasis on the education of girls and disadvantaged sections of society. Shiksha Karmi aimed to achieve universal elementary education by training local individuals to be teachers, thus countering teacher absenteeism, which was seen as a major contributor to high dropout of students in rural schools. In 2003, the two programs were brought under the umbrella of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

**Figure 1. Statistics for Girls’ Education in Rajasthan**



In 2005, the government launched the Rajasthan Education Initiative (REI), designed as an umbrella program that catalyzed partnerships with global and local private sector foundations, charitable organizations, and NGOs to achieve education objectives across the state. Pilots under REI would be scaled up across the state to have a significant impact on education outcomes.

Efforts by the government and NGOs have improved literacy rates in Rajasthan. Yet the female literacy rate in Rajasthan is still approximately 44 percent—the lowest in the country—and significantly lower than the 76 percent rate for males. The estimated percentage of out-of-school girls is markedly higher than out-of-school boys (Table 1). The government has set a target for the 12th five-year plan (2012–17) to bring the gender gap down to 5 for both primary and upper primary schools.

Regarding school infrastructure, the ASER 2016 report estimates that 79.8 percent of the schools have usable toilet facilities for girls, 5.1 percent of schools had provisions for girls' toilets but were locked, whereas 10.5 percent of the toilets were not usable.

Educated girls have the unique ability to bring unprecedented social and economic changes to their families and communities. By empowering village communities such as those in Rajasthan to improve the quality of girls' education and infrastructure in government schools, more girls can be educated at a larger scale. As a result, health, income levels, and overall livelihoods can advance, bringing about social transformation of rural and tribal societies.

# Innovation

## Educate Girls

Educate Girls is a project of the Foundation to Educate Girls Globally, a Mumbai-based non-profit organization working toward promoting girls' education. Founded in 2007, Educate Girls aims to improve girls' enrollment, retention, and academic performance in government schools by leveraging existing community and government resources and holistically tackling issues at the root of gender inequality in India's education system.

Safeena Husain is the Executive Director and Founder of Educate Girls. Safeena has worked extensively with rural and urban underserved communities in South America, Africa, and Asia. A graduate of the London School of Economics, Safeena first started developing the Educate Girls model in India in 2005.

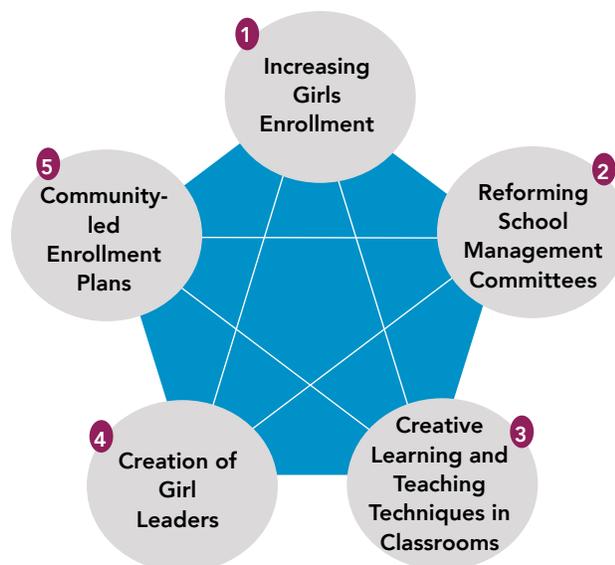
Educate Girls has its management and outreach office in Mumbai and current operations in the districts of Ajmer, Bhilwara, Banswara, Bundi, Jalore, Jhalawar, Pali, Sirohi, Rajsamand and Udaipur in Rajasthan; Dhar, Alirajpur and Jhabua in Madhya Pradesh. It has a team of over 1,400 full-time employees and over 10,000 volunteers. Its annual budget for the Fiscal Year 2017–18 is USD 8.7 million.

Educate Girls' ultimate goal is to improve access and quality of education for approximately three million children living in underserved communities in India by 2018.

## Service Delivery Model for Reform

Educate Girls presents a comprehensive model for school reform based on community mobilization rather than the more prevalent single strategy solution, such as scholarships or material support. Their approach focuses on improving the Enrollment – Retention – Learning cycle of every girl in the districts in which it operates. It has developed a five-point service delivery

**Figure 2. Five Pillars of Educate Girls Strategy**



model to involve and empower identified stakeholders to create a system that promotes and supports girls' education. Figure 2 provides an overview.

**(1) Increasing Girls Enrollment**—Educate Girls targets all out-of-school girls in the age group of 6–14 years in the most rural, remote, and underserved gender gap districts of Rajasthan. It estimates the number primarily using a combination of secondary government databases, but also pulls data from the census and District Information on School Education statistics. On the basis of this secondary information, the Educate Girls team undertakes a door-to-door primary survey to identify the out-of-school girls. This survey ensures that the target group members are identified at the start of the intervention. Since its inception in 2007, Educate Girls reports that more than 150,000 girls between the ages of 6–14 have been enrolled in schools. Compared to the baseline, this represents an enrollment rate of more than 90 percent (Educate Girls Project Completion Report 2010).

**(2) Reforming School Management Committees**—Educate Girls trains existing School Management Committees (SMCs) to make the school infrastructure more girl-friendly. They work together with parents, the village community, and SMCs to develop action plans for girls' enrollment, retention, and support. In particular, they equip SMCs with knowledge about the Right to Education Act, skills to conduct school assessments, training to prepare and execute School Improvement Plans, and handholding support to improve school governance and administration.

**(3) Creative Learning and Teaching Techniques in Classrooms**—To improve the quality of teaching and thereby learning outcomes for students, Educate Girls trains and supports government schoolteachers with child-centric Creative Learning and Teaching techniques that move away from rote learning.

In early 2016, Educate Girls embarked on a project to overhaul its learning curriculum. Educate Girls partnered with Sol's Assessment and Remedial Centre (Sol's ARC), a pedagogy and child psychology expert, to revamp the curriculum. Sol's ARC is a non-profit organization that has expertise in developing and implementing pedagogy to maximize the learning gains of children in diverse contexts. It took Educate Girls and Sol's ARC almost a year to design new learning kits that are called "Gyan ka Pitara" (which translates to "Repository of Knowledge"). The new curriculum is robust, child-friendly, context-specific, and sensitive to the needs of the most marginalized and under-served children in India. The curriculum builds micro competencies of the children and provides for approximately 250 worksheets per child.

**(4) Creation of Girl Leaders**—Educate Girls forms a 13-member Girls' Council or "Bal Sabha," which stimulate girls' participation in matters related to their growth and development. They hold life skills sessions to boost the girls' communication, leadership, assertiveness, and problem-solving skills.

**(5) Community-led Enrollment Plans**—Educate Girls builds a cadre of village-based youth leaders, called "Team Balika," to work as champions for girls' education and catalysts for school reform. Team Balika go door-to-door to convince families to prioritize girls' education. The members also work in the schools to identify and solve problems around girls' enrollment, to mentor young girls and SMCs, and to improve learning outcomes. They work directly with teachers and headmasters to introduce Creative Learning and Teaching techniques and the Gyan Ka Pitara curriculum in classrooms.

## Evolution of Educate Girls

In 2008, after the successful completion of a pilot project covering 50 schools in the Pali district of Rajasthan, Educate Girls signed an agreement with the government to scale up the project to 500 schools across three blocks of Pali, which had the highest gender disparity among all districts in Rajasthan. Figure 3 on the next page shows the growth of Educate Girls since 2007.

**Figure 3. Phases in Educate Girls Evolution**



An evaluation of the Pali project highlighted the following outcomes (Educate Girls 2010):

- **Enrollment:** 99 percent girl enrollment in the project area and a sharp decline (93 percent) in out-of-school girls in all three blocks.
- **Infrastructure:** Comparative analysis of baseline and endline statistics from 500 schools showed a significant improvement of infrastructure facilities in intervention schools.
- **Learning levels:** Significant improvement in learning levels.
- **Hindi reading (paragraphs):** Increased from 42 percent to 59 percent.
- **English reading (paragraphs):** Increased from 15 percent to 43 percent.
- **Math (two digit addition and subtraction):** increased from 26 percent to 57 percent.

These results led to the scale-up of the Educate Girls intervention. In February 2010, the government of Rajasthan asked Educate Girls to extend the model to every government school in Pali district. They signed an agreement to expand the program to 2,342 schools, covering 1,067 villages across 10 blocks in Pali. In 2011, they again scaled up to cover all blocks of Jalore, and then all blocks of Sirohi in 2013. As of 2017, Educate Girls is present in 13 educationally backward districts of Rajasthan (10 districts) and Madhya Pradesh (3 districts).

### Financing

Educate Girls is funded by individuals, organizations, institutions, government, and community-based programs. Some of the key donors and supporters include: Educate a Child Initiative, UBS Optimus Foundation, LGT Venture Philanthropy, Cartier Charitable Foundation, The Mulago Foundation, Jasmine Social Investments, COMO Foundation, Cotopaxi, MARICO Ltd., Bank of America Continuum, ORACLE, The World Bank, and others. Educate Girls has also leveraged philanthropy from online portals such as Global Giving, to raise funds from individuals and from payroll contributions.

This diverse funding provides a mix of one-time payments from individuals to multi-year commitments from donors and funders (minimum three years). Educate Girls has raised over USD 6 million since the inception of the organization. Its field results and corresponding impacts on the life of a girl in Rajasthan demonstrated by its reports and a strong communication strategy have helped leverage partnerships with a range of donors.

At the same time, Educate Girls' strategy for the use of funds is carefully designed. The variable costs are planned in advance during an annual budgeting exercise conducted in December every year, three months before the end of the financial year (March).

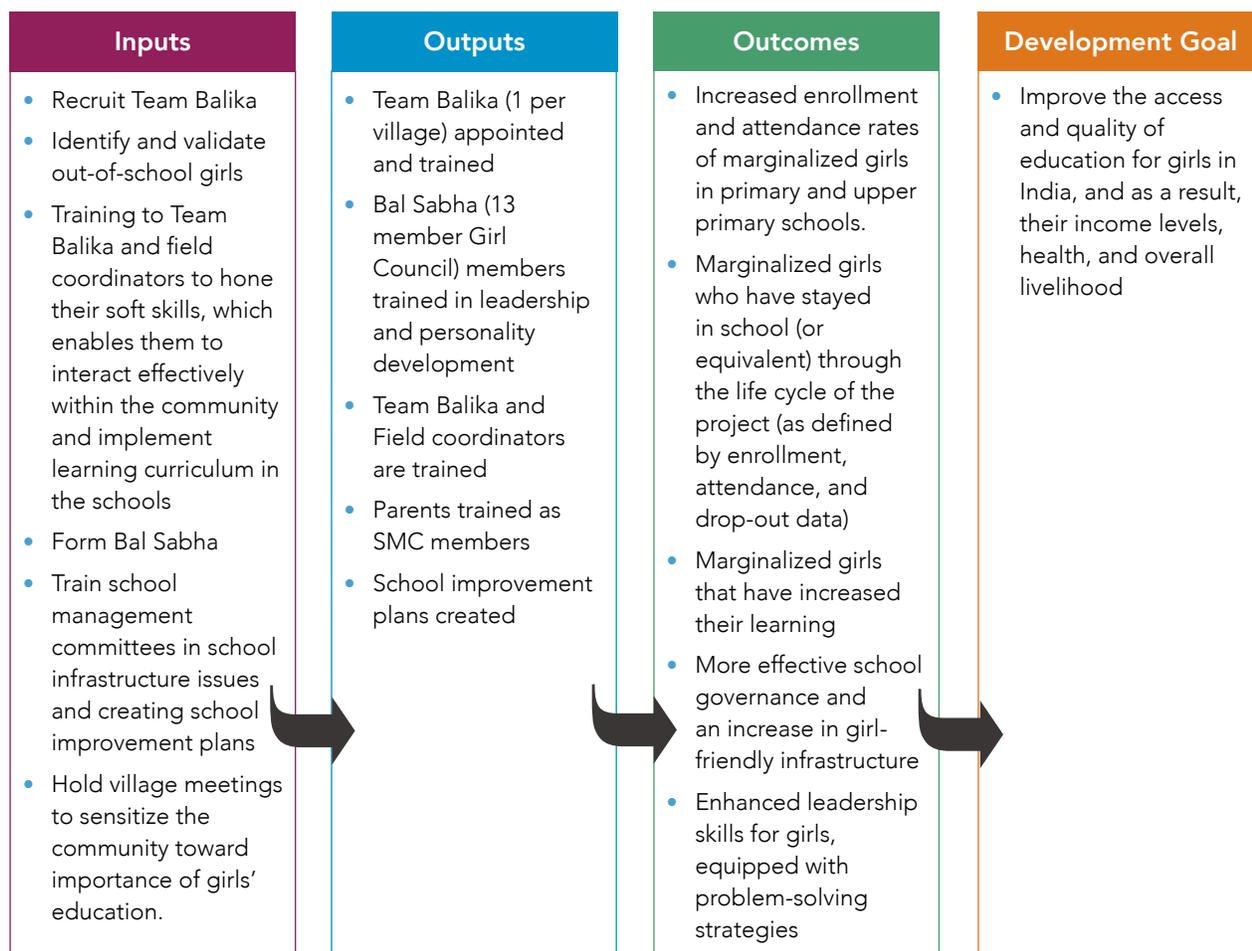
In 2013, Educate Girls, in partnership with Instiglio, a Harvard-incubated consultancy that designs, structures, and implements results-based financing models, adopted the Payment-by-Results concept, which directly links funding to outcome and impact.

In June 2014, Educate Girls (as a service provider) along with UBS Optimus Foundation (as an investor) and Children's Investment Fund Foundation (as an outcome payer) launched the world's first Development Impact Bond (DIB) in education. The DIB in education will focus on improving learning outcomes for 15,000 children in 166 schools in Bhilwara district of Rajasthan, India.

Under the DIB, Educate Girls' results will be rigorously measured and, if Educate Girls is successful in improving outcomes, Children's Investment Fund Foundation—the outcome payer in this case—will pay investors back with returns at approximately 7–13 percent, depending on the rate of success. This payment by results model will allow Educate Girls to innovate and tailor its program to impact 15,000 children in a Rajasthan district. The first year results have been promising despite challenges in launching an unprecedented intervention. The results show the program has enrolled 44% of all out-of-school girls identified, and has achieved 27% of the total target for learning progress.

## Results Chain

**Figure 4. Results Chain for Educate Girls Model**



# Implementation

The Educate Girls model mobilizes underutilized resources in the form of parents, communities, teachers, government officials, and even children to bring girls who have dropped out back into school to stay and receive meaningful education.

## Program Components in Detail

### Reforming School Administration

Educate Girls' engagement in a district starts after signing the Memorandum of Understanding under the REI. A major activity of the project is to get community support and a local government authorities sanction (collector, district education officer, block development officer, etc.) for its objectives and activities. This ensures that the target group is able to access benefits under various government programs.

One of the key elements of Educate Girls' strategy is to mobilize the community to promote education of girls. Community mobilization is imperative to bringing long term sustainable change. Educate Girls sensitizes the community towards importance of girls' education, appraises the community on the socio-economic benefits of girls' education and subsequently builds the capacities of the community to mobilize resources around girls' education. Gram Siksha Sabha (Village education meets) and Mohalla (neighbourhood) meetings are organized to prepare community based enrolment plans and to distribute responsibility between the village leaders, elders, school administration and the organizational staff and Team Balika (community volunteer) to bring the girls back to school.

The SMC is responsible for school governance and administration. During the period of implementation, Educate Girls staff trains and facilitates SMC members to develop and implement School Improvement Plans. The plans primarily assesses school infrastructure needs, which include:

- Toilets and drinking water facilities
- Electricity i.e. fans and tube-lights in classrooms
- Provision of shed to cook the mid-day meals at schools
- Enrollment and appointment of teachers for single teacher schools
- Boundary walls for the schools
- Playground in the compound of the school

The SMC monitors the annual School Improvement Plan on a quarterly basis, along with the teachers and school administration. Educate Girls reports that over 47,000 SMCs have been facilitated and provided support to prepare the School Improvement Plans.

### Improving Learning Outcomes

Educate Girls in partnership with financial support from UNICEF and technical support from Pratham, the Creative Learning and Teaching approach—pioneered by Educate Girls— helps improve the learning levels of children by integrating child-centric classroom processes with teaching. The approach promotes accelerated learning methods (charts, visuals, etc.) to improve age-specific reading and numeracy levels. Educate Girls undertakes age appropriate pre- and post-training tests (based on ASER Tools) with students in the target schools to assess

the performance of children in languages (Hindi and English) and numeracy (Math). Over the years, more than 600,000 children have demonstrated improved learning levels.

However, over the years, a need to revamp the learning curriculum was felt, owing to an increased programmatic focus on quality by further improving the learning outcomes of children. Additionally, with the announcement of the Sustainable Development Goals (2015), globally, the focus is gradually shifting toward ensuring quality education. In the light of these developments, Educate Girls embarked upon a project to revamp its learning curriculum.

In its effort to improve the learning levels in schools, starting 2016 Educate Girls has initiated teaching sessions with the use of learning kits called Gyan ka Pitara (GKP). The learning kits have been designed and developed in collaboration with pedagogy expert, Sol's ARC. The GKP learning kits have replaced the previous learning curriculum that was called Creative Learning and Teaching (CLT) methodology. GKP kits are designed for five levels of learning (pre-literacy & levels 1-4) for children in grades 3, 4 and 5. The learning tools focus on building micro-competencies in English, Hindi and Math. Each kits contains over 250 worksheets, ensuring no child is left behind. While designing the kits, the needs of the most marginalized children have been taken into account to make sure that the curriculum is child-friendly and context-specific.

### **Creating Girl Leaders**

In the spirit of the UN Convention on Child Rights, Educate Girls initiated the concept of Bal Sabha (Girls Council) in its pilot project in Pali. Keeping with the focus of empowering girls, Bal Sabha aims to enhance leadership abilities among girls enrolled in class 6-8 in the project districts. This democratically elected 13-member council gives girls a voice, a leadership position in the school. Educate Girls staff along with Team Balika impart training in "life skills" to boost confidence, communication, leadership, public speaking, health, sanitation and problem solving skills.

A 13-member Bal Sabha is elected through a democratic process in a school. The members take responsibility for cleanliness, upkeep, and maintenance of the school infrastructure, and support the teachers in managing various activities. Members also take leading roles in sports, education, and discipline management. They help their school and the Educate Girls staff to identify out-of-school girls in their villages. Bal Sabha members act as change agents, encouraging enrollment of identified out-of-school girls in their respective villages.

### **Village-Based Volunteers: Team Balika**

Educate Girls programmatic interventions hinge around its community volunteers called the "Team Balika". The program facilitates community ownership through the Team Balika who are community mobilizers working as champions for girls' education and catalysts for school reform at the village level. They are unpaid volunteers (both boys and girls) in the age group of 18-30 who are usually the most educated youth in their respective villages. They are our eyes and ears on the ground with an understanding of the community dynamics and help us spread awareness and target behaviour change. Educate Girls trains the Team Balika in educating the parents, village leaders and elders about their rights. There is one Team Balika appointed at every village. Team Balika along with the Educate Girls field staff carry out the door to door survey to identify every out of school girl. They persuade and convince the parents of the children to send them to school. The Team Balika are involved in activities of enrolment, ensuring lower drop outs in schools and implementing the learning curriculum in classrooms.

Volunteers are trained at the district level by Educate Girls staff on door-to-door surveys, how to conduct life- skill activities games. Educate Girls provides a platform for volunteers to get associated with community-level work that improves their social standing in the villages. The volunteers have an opportunity to get absorbed into the Educate Girls team as Field Coordinators or receive employment opportunities with the government, other NGOs, and

programs being implemented in the area. It is expected that after Educate Girls' exit the district, the Team Balikas will play a major role in ensuring long-term sustainability of the project.

Team Balika work with teachers and existing SMCs to ensure provision of quality education. Their primary task is to facilitate Child Tracking Surveys and work with the Gram Shiksha Sabhas in community mobilization. They support the SMC to develop and implement School Improvement Plans and support teachers in conducting Creative Learning and Teaching.

### Program Delivery Roles

Educate Girls' program delivery at the district level is structured with clear roles and responsibilities delineated at different levels.

- One volunteer Team Balika per village (in a few cases there is one Team Balika for more than one village).
- Field Coordinators, as paid core staff at the district level, cover an average of 12 villages and visit every village approximately twice a month providing support to the Team Balika and liaising with the SMC.
- Block Officers monitor the Team Balika and Field Coordinators. The Block Officers report to the District Manager.
- The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) team support the District Manager.

### M&E and Reporting

On the monitoring and evaluation front, the Block Monitoring and Evaluation Impact Officer conducts qualitative and quantitative monitoring of program activities including validating field data on a monthly basis and conducting interviews with girl students, teachers, parents', SMC members, and other community stakeholders. The Field staff and Impact staff conduct structured assessment of field activities using a survey developed by the Monitoring team.

Additionally, data based on Right to Education compliance is tracked on a quarterly basis. This data includes indicators around enrolment, attendance, learning, school infrastructure and facilities, teachers, as well as qualitative indicators such as student and teacher attitudes.

Progress reports are shared with all key stakeholders. Monitoring & Evaluation department collates the information, verifies it, and sends a report to the state and head office, which is then disseminated to stakeholders.

### Mobile Tracking

Educate Girls' rigorous monitoring system is designed to provide regular feedback to allow changes in service delivery and implementation strategy to achieve the best possible results for out of school girls. Educate Girls is a leader in adoption of mobile technology for Monitoring & Evaluation and impact assessment. Educate Girls' technology partner Lionbridge Technologies has helped develop two phases through a standalone application on android platform which:

1. Track the movement of the field personnel by registering the location and time via GPS
2. Register village- and school-level outreach and impact data.

The Educate Girls' Mobile application tracks movement of field personnel and registers the location and time via GPS validated by the time from cloud server. This is done through geo-tagging of villages and tracking the movement of the field personnel to enable real time monitoring of employees. Educate Girls' innovation of a Mobile application ensures real-time collection of school-level data, key-performance indicators and creation of a real-time dashboard to provide data transparency in reporting. The mobile application is used to register village & school level information like number of girls & boys, school infrastructure, number of teachers, education quality and other information mentioned in the School Assessment Chart. This has resulted in reduction of time in compilation of data, eliminated possibility of human error and has enabled speedy decision making base on real time data.

## Performance Management System

Educate Girls is developing and implementing an internal Performance Management System to collect, aggregate, monitor, display and report performance of program activities carried out in the field. The Performance Management System will help us create a user friendly interface for data collection and validation. It will integrate mobile based data (outreach and impact from the villages and schools) and secondary data sources (mostly Government data) used by Educate Girls. The end result of this System is a real-time dashboard of program data which would facilitate data transparency and reporting. With its implementation, Educate Girls looks forward to drawing insights from data which would further enable decision making for establishment of strong routines for collecting and analyzing data to evaluate progress and make mid-course corrections and programme refinement.

## Partnerships

Educate Girls began its operations in Rajasthan collaborating with the Government of Rajasthan under a Public-Private-Partnership framework – the Rajasthan Education Initiative (REI). Tying into the RTE Act, Educate Girls works to bring about systemic change in the districts it operates in by mobilizing the communities and parents.

Educate Girls also has a wide range of sector partners, which include:

- **Dasra**, India's leading strategic philanthropy organization, to facilitate strategic planning, program systematization, and scale-up
- **Lionbridge Technologies** for the Android platform that helps track the movement of field-level employees
- **Accenture**, to undertake need gap analysis resulting in planning human resources requirements at Educate Girls
- **Strategy&** (previously known as Booz and Co), to develop a five-year strategic roadmap
- **Mercuri Urval**, to develop psychometric assessment for employees across all levels, to help identify the right human resource with the right skill and fit.
- **Dalberg** created an international expansion strategy for Educate Girls. Moreover, it has also created Educate Girls' learning outcomes based sustainability strategy.
- **APCO worldwide** is an independent global public affairs and strategic communications consultancy. APCO has been guiding Educate Girls on government relations and advocacy.

# Impact

Educate Girls takes a holistic approach to education by mobilizing communities to take a stand against gender disparity, involving parents, schools, community leaders, local government, and village-based volunteers.

**Table 2. Summary of Impact from Educate Girls Initiative**

An assessment of the Educate Girls business model based on an analytical framework (as of Fiscal Year 2016–17):.

CRITERIA	EVIDENCE												
Reach/Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability: Presence in over 12,000 schools across 8,000 villages of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh</li> <li>• Access:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Over 150,000 out-of-school girls enrolled in school</li> <li>◦ Over 3.8 million total beneficiaries of programs</li> <li>◦ Over 46,000 SMCs formed</li> <li>◦ Over 26,000 Bal Sabha girls trained</li> <li>◦ Over 93% of girls retained in schools.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Affordability: Within government schools</li> </ul>												
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than 31,000 girls in the age group of 6–15 years have been trained in life skills across the six districts since inception</li> <li>• Over 90% girls' enrollment</li> <li>• Increase in average attendance of children in schools from 62% to 87%.</li> <li>• Increase in schools with drinking water up from 46% to 82%</li> <li>• Increase in separate girls' toilets from 44% to 71%</li> <li>• Increase of learning outcomes in Hindi, English and Math by 25–40%.</li> </ul> <table border="1"> <caption>Learning Outcomes Comparison</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Learning Outcome</th> <th>Non-Program Schools</th> <th>Program Schools</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Can read a story in Hindi</td> <td>15%</td> <td>35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Can read up to a sentence in English</td> <td>7%</td> <td>27%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Can do 2 digit multiplication</td> <td>11%</td> <td>29%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Learning Outcome	Non-Program Schools	Program Schools	Can read a story in Hindi	15%	35%	Can read up to a sentence in English	7%	27%	Can do 2 digit multiplication	11%	29%
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Can read a story in Hindi	15%	35%											
Can read up to a sentence in English	7%	27%											
Can do 2 digit multiplication	11%	29%											
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigorous baseline and endline evaluation for every intervention, and results are measured against control group of non-program schools</li> <li>• Data collection via mobile technology on Android platform</li> <li>• All program villages/schools geo-tagged</li> <li>• Randomized Control Trial with University of Michigan and J-PAL</li> </ul>												

CRITERIA	EVIDENCE
Cost-effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model allows for sending one girl to school at USD 5 per year (USD 400 per school)</li> </ul> <p>The Government of Rajasthan spends approximately USD 22,000 per year on a primary school (costs are averages per school calculated by Educate Girls based on total allocation) and achieves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9% of out-of-school children</li> <li>23% of students enrolled but not attending school</li> <li>Only 36% of children able to read a simple paragraph in Hindu</li> </ul> <p>Based on the 500 schools pilot, Educate Girls spends an additional USD 500 and now the same school has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1% of out-of-school children</li> <li>14% of students enrolled but not attending school</li> <li>60% of children able to read a simple paragraph in Hindi</li> </ul>
Impact on Development Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As of now, the program's priority is to improve the school attendance and retention rates of girls ages 6–14 and their quality of learning. They do not track health, income, or other development outcomes.</li> </ul>
Potential for Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mobilizes resources in the form of parents, communities, teachers, government officials, and children to improve school infrastructure and quality of girls' education. Effective empowerment and engagement of the community ensures sustainability of the interventions.</li> </ul>
Potential for Scalability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverages government investments in education, making it efficient, cost-effective, and scalable.</li> </ul>

## Success Stories

Seema is a 16-year-old girl from Pali. She lost her father at the age of 11. To add to her despair, she was married off to an abusive alcoholic who was twice her age. Eventually, he threw her out onto the street. Seema was alone, living on the street when Team Balika member Sharda found her. Sharda counseled Seema to help her learn to face her struggles with confidence. With Sharda's help, Seema gained the courage to re-enroll in school, where after studying for two years, she passed her 10th grade exams with flying colors. Today, Seema is a proud member of Team Balika. She works with Sharda to enroll out-of-school girls, support school-teachers, and conduct life skills education sessions.

Rohini is a 13-year-old who lives in a remote village of Madhya Pradesh. Her family was very poor. With not much job choices in hand, every year her parents migrate to other regions in search of daily-wage labor jobs. As a child, Rohini has hardly spent any time with her parents. Rohini initially stayed back in her village with her grandparents and attended school until grade 5. At this grade, she was a big girl and her parents now feared for her security if they left her home during their migration. Her community does not impress on the need for girls' to be educated. By completing 5th standard, Rohini was already "highly educated" by now. So she was asked to drop-out at grade 5. Rohini was not shocked! She had anticipated this and was totally prepared to migrate with her parents. This is how she was out of a formal education for over a year. In the summer of 2016, Educate Girls' Field coordinator (FC) identified her as an out-of-school girl. Her parents were approached but they refused to get Rohini re-enrolled. Soon after this, the family migrated. But the field coordinator kept following up with the family. He approached Rohini's grandparents and was somehow able to convince her grandmother who called Rohini's father and ordered him to drop Rohini back. Thus Rohini was re-enrolled into grade 6. Rohini wants to study well and get a job so she can buy her family an agricultural land and some cattle.

# Sustainability and Scale-Up

Features of the Educate Girls strategy that encourage its scale-up and sustainability include:

- State governments committed to “Education to All” under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.
- Community mobilization strategy that gives positive results and can help combat cultural issues and support systemic change.
- Empowerment of community, teachers, girl leaders, government staff that leads to more sustained results and processes.
- No new parallel programs/systems that need excess funds and management.
- Ability to achieve near 100 percent results in enrollment, retention, and marked increase in academic performance.
- Self-contained district staff unit.

Areas to consider moving forward with regard to scale and sustainability include:

## Financial

Because the Educate Girls model does not have a potential to generate income, there is a high dependency on funding from grants, investors and the government. Educate Girls has a standalone program budget of USD 6.1 million (Fiscal Year 2016–17). Following the public-private-partnership model there is a need to sign an MOU with the government prior to the commencement of the Educate Girls program in each district.

The team at Educate Girls is confident about the results of the Payment-by- Results pilot launched in June 2014 in partnership with UBS Optimus Foundation. Educate Girls anticipates that Payment-by-Results will facilitate rapid scale-up of the program. (Figures 5 and 6).

## Infrastructure

The distance of higher education facilities from home forces the girls to discontinue their education. Families prefer not to send girls to distant schools. Hence, the efforts put in by Educate Girls toward primary education for girls may not

lead to higher education for girls. The interaction with girl students in intervention schools in Pali and Jalore suggests strong desire to study further and pursue diverse careers. The present thrust of government and donors toward educating girls in the 6–14 year age group needs to be quickly followed up with incremental investments in secondary and senior secondary levels. Without this investment, the dividends of current investments would be lost.

**Figure 5. Projected Budget for Scaling Up in Millions (USD)**



**Figure 6. Growth to Date and Future Plans**

	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17 (P)	2017–18 (P)	2018–19 (P)
<b>Districts (#)</b>	3	6	6	9	12	15
<b>Blocks (#)</b>	18	40	42	62	82	102
<b>Schools (#)</b>	5,006	8,500	8,500	14,900	21,300	27,700
<b>Children (#)</b>	567,812	13,01,960	13,01,960	20,05,960	27,09,960	34,13,960
<b>Girl leaders (#)</b>	30,914	31,265	35,009	66,469	97,929	1,29,389
<b>SMC members (#)</b>	54,000	1,11,840	1,11,840	1,95,040	2,78,240	3,61,440
<b>EG employees (#)</b>	190	580	580	1,008	1,397	1,786
<b>Team Balika (#)</b>	1,556	4,569	4,569	7,769	10,969	14,169
<b>Project budget (\$)</b>	1,259,052	3,169,863	3,532,523	5,859,769	7,604,213	9,479,023

Growth plan in consultation with Booz&Co. Projections based on current government data available for the districts.

Aligning itself with the National Mission for Secondary Education (RMSA) nationally and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) globally, Educate Girls model is progressive and futuristic to adopt and build its model keeping in view the maximum need and opportunity for intervention.

Combined with Educate Girls’ longstanding experience of working in elementary/ primary education in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, Educate Girls now proposes extending its intervention into secondary education (Grades 9 and 10) by piloting community and in-school interventions for secondary school students.

### Human Resources

Prominent constraints are related to human resources:

- Difficulty in retaining the field staff/volunteers.
- Difficulty in government liaison as at times the government officials keep getting transferred to different districts.

For the targets set for 2018, Educate Girls would need to strengthen Educate Girls’ human resource base, which is the most critical challenge. The present system ensured that Educate Girls has had a less than 10 percent attrition rate among Team Balika and Block Coordinators. Progress toward 2018 would need a three-fold increase in Team Balikas and a two-fold increase in the core staff. Educate Girls has been supported by Accenture and Mercuri Urval for need assessment, recruitment, and associated processes.

However, the selection, recruitment, retention, and motivation of a large pool of human resources would need not only financial resources but also human resource management systems. Educate Girls has recruited a human resource specialist who has been tasked with leading this strategic component of the Educate Girls’ delivery model. Incremental investments would however be required on strengthening human resources management systems.

### Social Barriers

Social norms and behaviors exist in the intervention districts, such as child marriage, poverty-induced migration, child labor, and gender bias. These are potential barriers for girls’ education that Educate Girls has been addressing. As the intervention scales up, increased investments would need to be made toward enhanced capacities of much larger numbers of Team Balika to overcome these barriers. Campaigns or strategies to convey the messages would have to be tailored to different districts to address caste and social knowledge, attitudes, and practices..

# Lessons Learned

## **Mobilize Communities**

The Educate Girls intervention demonstrates scalable approaches for ensuring enrollment and retention of children in schools. The community-centered Child Tracking Surveys ensures comprehensive coverage in the target areas. The approaches to mobilize community through the SMC need special mention, which ensures provision of infrastructure and availability of teachers in schools. Educate Girls reports a low attrition rate of five percent at the level of Team Balika since inception.

## **Use Girl-Centric Mechanisms in Schools**

Educate Girls has piloted and scaled improvements in child-centric classroom processes. The child-centric approach helps improve the learning levels of children by promoting accelerated learning methods (charts, visuals, etc.) to improve age-specific reading and numeracy levels. Given increasing allocation of government and donor funds for universalizing primary education, Educate Girls' approach for ensuring learning outcomes can provide a tested and scalable model for projects.

## **Establish a Close Working Relationship with Government**

Since 2005, Educate Girls has managed a close partnership with the government of Rajasthan, setting progressively higher goals each year. Formalizing the non-financial partnership helped to leverage public resources effectively and efficiently. The partnership is based on clearly defined roles and responsibilities, agreed common goals, and monitoring and reporting arrangements.

## APPENDIX I

### References

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Global Partnership for Education. <http://www.globalpartnership.org/focus-areas/out-of-school-children>

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UNESCO 2014. Available through <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/default.aspx>

This case study was developed through an analysis of qualitative and quantitative studies, desk review, organizational-level data analysis, and local consultations.

## APPENDIX II

### Organizational Background

VISION: We aim to achieve behavioral, social and economic transformation for all girls toward an India where all children have equal opportunities to access quality education.

MISSION: We leverage existing community and government resources to ensure that all girls are in school and learning well.

GOAL: Our goal is to improve access and quality of education for around 3 million children living in underserved communities in India by 2018.

FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Safeena Husain

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM:

- Suresh Subramanian: Chief Operating Officer
- Maharshi Vaishnav: Director - Development & Communications
- Zeeshan Sumrani: Senior Manager, Program
- Dr. Neelam Raisanghani: Head of Government Liason

## Creative Learning and Teaching: Grade Gain Analysis (2013-14)

— CAN INTERACTIVE TEACHING TRULY IMPROVE LEARNING ? —

# YES!

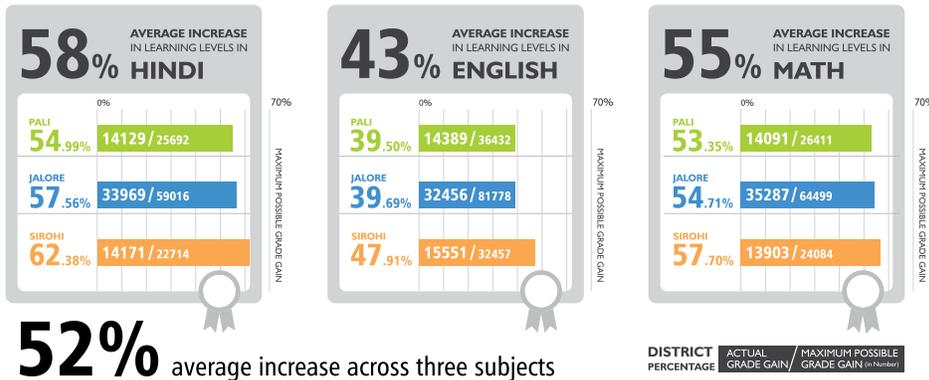
During the Academic Year 2013-14

**WE tested** **53548** STUDENTS (POST TEST)

ACROSS **1600** SCHOOLS



The quantifiable results of this research are commendable!



### Furthermore

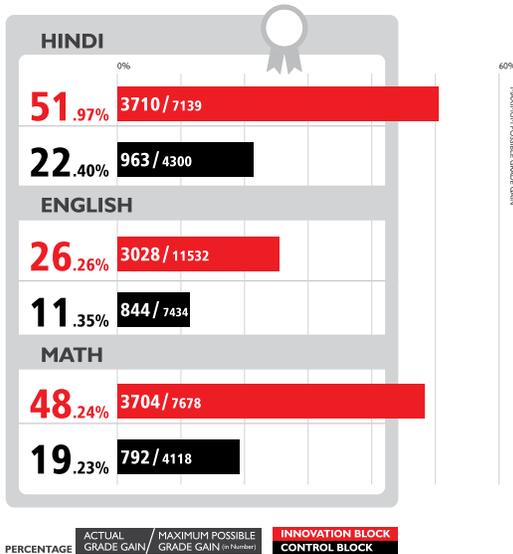
**6910** STUDENTS WERE TESTED

across

**4013** INNOVATION BLOCK

and

**2897** CONTROL BLOCK



A promising average increment of

# 42%

in learning levels across Hindi, English and Math was recorded in the **educate girls INNOVATION BLOCK** in Sirohi district

In comparison, the Control Block saw an average increase of 17.33%

APPENDIX IV

Partners





In India, women and girls, especially in rural areas, are particularly affected by the country's illiteracy problem, since they face discrimination based on their sex and need for childbearing. In Rajasthan, the north-western Indian state that borders Pakistan, 9 out of 26 districts have the worst gender gap in India for girls' education.

Established in 2007, Educate Girls is holistically tackling issues at the root cause of gender inequality in India's education system that has helped to ensure over 90% enrollment and significantly higher attendance for all girls as well as improved school infrastructure, quality of education and learning outcomes for all children.

As a result of Educate Girls' efforts to date, an army of "girls champions" has been created to combat cultural issues and support systemic change. More than 150,000 out-of-school girls have been enrolled in school and the program has benefitted around 3.8 million of beneficiaries. Continuing to address the social and cultural barriers in girls' education can bring about real transformation, such as improvement in health, income levels, and overall livelihoods in rural populations.