EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
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“Many governments and NGOs want to mobilize communities to help with education. Educate Girls has found one way that works. At a cost of 1% of government’s budget, it helps government schools reach nearly all children and dramatically improve learning.”

Barbara Herz, Author of “What works in Girls Education” and former head of the World Bank’s Women in Development Division

Introduction

Educate Girls is holistically tackling issues at the root cause of gender inequality in India’s education system. Our comprehensive model reforms government schools through community ownership and ensures 100% enrollment, higher attendance and improved learning outcomes for all girls.

Founded in 2007, the non-governmental organization has its management and outreach office in Mumbai and operations in Pali and Jalore, Rajasthan.

This Executive Summary focuses on the results and impact of our 500 schools project in three blocks in Pali district, Rajasthan. As Co-Partner of the Rajasthan Education Initiative (REI), Educate Girls has reached out to 70,000 children, including 37,000 girls, their families and communities in over 200 villages in three blocks of Pali District in Rajasthan through various program interventions.

The report aims to reflect how Educate Girls’ program interventions have contributed to 99% girls’ enrollment, higher attendance and improvement in learning levels and outcomes for all children.
Education Scenario in India

Across India, particularly in rural societies, girls are not always educated and many have minimal understandings of their own rights. The national average shows that there is only 1 woman for every 2 men that receives an education in India.

Rural communities are often completely unaware of the concept and benefit of educating girls. This directly correlates to drop out rates: for every 100 girls in rural India, only 1 reaches class 12. With only 55% of schools in India having girls’ toilets and only 42% of teachers being female, enrolling marginalized girls poses an immense challenge.

Rajasthan has 9 of the 26 most backward districts in India. The gender gap in these districts is so immense, that girls and women are lagging behind their male counterparts in all spheres of life. Pali district records around 10% gender gap at the primary school level and an alarmingly high 25% gender gap at upper primary school level.

Estimates show that girls average less than four years of education in a lifetime and 40% leave school before they reach 5th grade. This situation stems from low quality of education, shortage of teachers, poverty, limiting attitudes towards gender roles and a lack of support from parents and the community.

Importance of education

Education enables girls to reason, to make informed decisions and most importantly, to live a healthy, productive life. Empowering and educating girls yields positive returns to individuals, families and societies, both now and for generations to come. Research by the UN and the World Bank show a multitude of positive effects.
When girls are educated...

- Birth rates fall and every four years in school reduces family size by 1.
- Child mortality falls and family health improves.
- Educated mothers are 40% more likely to immunize their children and 5 times more likely to educate their children. Thus literacy in future generations accelerates.
- National income grows by 10% for each additional year of schooling.
- Regions stabilize as violence and extremism decline.

**Our Model**

We leverage current government investments in education and mobilize the village community to take ownership of the school reform. We ensure that teachers, the government, parents, and even girls become active participants in the process and operate independently in school governance even after the withdrawal of Educate Girls.

Educate Girls systematically challenges structural and cultural-socio-economic barriers through a combination of community mobilization strategies and child-centric learning techniques. We collaborate with organizations like UNICEF, SERVE and Pratham to import best practices into program interventions. Our strategy mix helps communities assess their school situation, initiate action plans and empower political constituencies to sustain positive results at the lowest cost.

Our model aims to:

- Support the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) at the State and District level
- Strengthen linkages between school, village community, teachers, School Management Committees (SMC), Block, District and State administrations
- Increase demand for girls’ education through community participation
- Create a holistic and sustainable platform for girls’ education

Educate Girls started its operations under the umbrella of the Rajasthan Education Initiative (REI) and was co-sponsored by the Government of Rajasthan and the World Economic Forum. In 2005 we Signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Rajasthan to develop and test a pilot project with 50 government schools. The pilot project started in 25 government schools in Jalore and Pali.

In December 2007, we scaled from 50 to 500 schools and 70,000 children in Sumerpur, Bali and Rani in Pali district. Educate Girls is currently working with 2,342 schools in the entire district of Pali, covering over 1,25,000 girls.
Objectives:

As per the MoU signed with Government of Rajasthan, Educate Girls’ project had the following objectives:

- To enhance enrollment and retention of girls through individual tracking, community mobilization and quality improvement
- To reduce gender disparity in the schools and project areas and improve the level of life skills and competency of the girl child
- To address the various critical needs of the girl child
- To improve the learning skills and academic performance of students
- To ensure an increased participation of children, families and communities in plans and actions for holistic education

500 SCHOOLS PROJECT, PALI, RAJASTHAN

In order to achieve the project objectives, Educate Girls conducted door to door surveys in all the villages to identify all out of school girls; we employed Creative Learning and Teaching techniques (CLT) for the teachers and organized Bal Sabhas (Children’s parliament) to advocate for girls leadership.

Bal Sabhas were formed in all 500 schools. The formation of the democratically elected Bal Sabhas stimulated girls’ participation in matters related to their growth and development and builds confidence, leadership and self-esteem. Educate Girls imparted 10 life skills to 6,500 Bal Sabha members.

Educate Girls trained the DIET (District Insitute for Education and Training) master trainers, 12 KGBV teachers and 324 school teachers in Creative Learning Training (CLT) techniques. After the training, we provided teachers in selected schools with technical guidance and classroom handholding support to implement the CLT module. The feedback from teachers was that CLT helped them to explain the concepts to their students, who not only enjoyed the classroom processes, but learnt at a faster pace.
Results of the two year project:

As part of the School Information Campaign (SIC), we collected the vital information to establish reliable data as a baseline for the impact study. Information like school infrastructure, student teacher ratio, and attendance, etc. was collected to identify the ‘Critical needs’.

1. Reduced out of school girls by 99%

During the project period, Educate Girls got 3,560 out-of-school girls enrolled/re-enrolled in schools, KGBV’s, bridge courses and Shiksha Mitra. Girls were enrolled in schools even in the most remote and tribal areas. Only 1% (279) girls remained out of school as per end-line survey in December, 2009.

- Girls enrollment increased from 90% to 99%
- 3,560 out of 3,839 identified girls enrolled/re-enrolled; only 279 remaining

![Chart showing reduction in out-of-school girls](attachment:image.png)

Out of School Girls’ data for 500 School Area: AS ON FEB 2010

2. Higher Attendance

Educate Girls program schools demonstrated consistently higher attendance of girls compared to non-program schools. Educate Girls tracked girls’ attendance in the schools by head count and from school attendance register.

- Girls attendance increased from 67% to 82%.
3. Improved Learning Levels and Outcomes

In order to assess the impact of CLT on the academic performance of students in program schools, Educate Girls conducted pre and post tests. The results demonstrate, that the use of CLT improved the classroom processes with greater interest, teamwork and confidence among the children. Children’s abilities in subjects like Hindi, English and Math increased dramatically.

- Hindi reading (paragraphs): up from 42% to 59%
- English reading (paragraphs): up from 15% to 43%
- Maths (two digit addition and subtraction): 26% to 57%

4. Girl Friendly Infrastructure

Educate Girls has been working towards making school infrastructure and environment girl friendly. This includes the provision of female teachers and various facilities, such as separate girls’ toilets and drinking water. Educate Girls’ intervention in the school infrastructure has led to an increase in the attendance of girls in Educate Girls schools.

- Number of schools with drinking water rose from 46% to 82%
- Number of schools with separate girls toilet increased from 44% to 71%

5. Improvement in Girls’ Life Skills

Educate Girls conducted pre and post training tests with girls in order to measure the impact of life skills. The various life skill areas were depicted in 17 pictures, having situational questions which elicited responses from the girls. Over 6,500 girls trained as leaders and in life skills through Bal Sabhas. The graph below shows the post test Life Skills Scores in program and non program schools.
The post test results reflect that the girls have improved ability to express their feelings and are able to articulate themselves better. They also display enhanced ability while coping with emotional situations, suggesting that the life skill inputs provided by trainers were crucial in affecting their conduct.

So far, Educate Girls project schools have seen great increases in girls’ enrollment and attendance, improved academic performance and significant action towards building ‘girl friendly’ schools.

**Challenges and Lessons Learnt**

**Rote Learning:**

Generally, it is seen that less classroom time is spent on child-centered practices such as active learning, discussions, projects, creative activities etc. The Educate Girls model has tried to address these issues through CLT (Creative Learning and Teaching Techniques) and introduced child-centric teaching and learning processes in the classrooms. Major challenges faced by Educate Girls were:

- Unavailability of timely support, dedicated and responsible people facilitating government aspects
- Shortage of teachers, especially of female teachers
- Lack of infrastructure
- Difficulty in motivating teachers to introduce new teaching techniques

**Conclusion**

Educate Girls project schools have seen great increases in girls’ enrollment and attendance, improved academic performance and significant action towards building ‘girl friendly’ schools. Most importantly they have seen a surge in community ownership and political constituency, a key factor in guaranteeing the success of the project. Working with the State Ministry of Education in Rajasthan, Educate Girls has now completed the first two stages. Now it is in the third and final developmental stage, expanding into every school in Pali District, which is more than 2,300 schools, serving about 260,000 children.

Educate Girls’ business model has succeeded in achieving a greater degree of sensitization among the community towards the need to make girls’ education a priority. Schools have made efforts to improve infrastructure, increase enrollment, decrease absenteeism and drop outs.