Championing girls’ quality education

India is the epicentre of gender disparity, with over 3 million girls out of school. We work to improve access to and the quality of education for girls in some of the most vulnerable districts of rural India, sustaining an innovative programme that promotes community ownership for school reform. We ensure that teachers, parents, girls and governments are actively engaged in revitalizing educational practices and outcomes.

**DURATION:** 2014-2017
**CHALLENGE:** Access to Basic Services, Women’s social and economic development
**COUNTRY:** India
**PARTNER:** Educate Girls

**CONTEXT**
India has by far the largest illiterate population in the world, accounting for 37 per cent of the global total. With over 3 million eligible girls out of school, India is also the epicentre of gender disparity, especially in rural areas. In Rajasthan, only 1 out of 2 women can read or write and for every 100 girls, only 1 reaches grade 5. Poverty, but more importantly cultural and social barriers, together with the poor quality of the state education infrastructure, keep many parents from sending their girls to school.

**ACTION**
Educate Girls challenges structural, cultural and socio-economic barriers through a combination of community mobilization strategies and child-centric learning and teaching techniques.
• **Community mobilization**: to increase girls’ enrolment, village volunteers (Team Balika) conduct door-to-door surveys to identify all out-of-school girls in the village. They raise awareness among families of the importance of girl child education.

• **Reforming school administration**: Village meetings are organized to prepare action plans for girls’ enrolment. A 15-member council, including parents, teachers and village leaders is elected in every village to handle school governance and administration. Committee members are trained and supported to prepare and implement school improvement plans to provide schools with separate girls' toilets and drinking water and conduct school assessments.

• **To improve learning outcomes**, one teacher per school is trained in Creative Learning and Teaching methods, bringing child-friendly, activity-based learning techniques into the classroom.

• **To empower girls and create girl leaders**, Educate Girls facilitates the election of Bal Sabhas (Girls’ Parliaments) in every upper primary school. This 13-member council gives girls a voice, a leadership position in the school and training in “life skills” to boost communication, leadership and problem solving skills.

**EXPECTED RESULTS**

The global purpose of the programme is to improve life chances for girls living in the remote and tribal communities of the Rajsamand district of Rajasthan. Educated women make informed decisions and live a healthy and productive life. They contribute to improving the whole community both now and for generations to come: they have fewer and healthier children, are three times less likely to be HIV+ and marry three years later.

Specifically, the programme aims to boost enrolment, retention and learning outcomes as follows:

- 80-90% of the out-of-school girls in Rajsamand district are enrolled in primary or lower secondary school
- 85% of them have stayed in school
- School governance is improved and more effective and girl-friendly infrastructures have increased
- Girls are equipped with enhanced leadership skills and problem-solving strategies
- Marginalized girls have increased their learning

**LONG-TERM STRATEGY**

This innovative programme promotes community ownership of school reform within the existing school framework, ensuring teachers, parents, girls and governments are actively engaged in revitalizing educational practices and outcomes. This approach enables the creation of a sustainable, scalable and holistic platform in each village. After the activities are implemented over three or four years, Educate Girls works to hand the project over to the community.