

Educate and Empower

IND-SMI-EAE-P03



Indore, India



Education

Total Budget

\$66,000

Project Timeline

DEC 21

NOV 24



Overview

This three-year project funded an established government-accredited primary school in a snake charmers' community of some 400 families. Before this project started, children in this community did not attend school but rather begged, stole and picked rags with their parents in order to feed themselves. The school has grown to accommodate a larger number of students and teachers with the construction of a slab and erection of a permanent tent for schooling and vocational training. Women were provided with tailoring skills and self-help group membership, while both men and women received income generation skills training. Medical care and counselling was available for 350 men, women and children.

Objectives



Education for 168 slum children

Impact

168 children have been consistently attending school for the past 3 years. Instead of begging and stealing, these children are setting career goals such as teachers, police officers, business owners and engineers. None of their parents are able to read or write or went to school.



Vocational training for 130 women

130 women have completed the Tailoring course. Some have started small businesses and others are sewing clothes for a living. Some women have started a self-help group with their own rules, thinking creatively to find solutions to problems and standing up for each other.



Capacity building for men

The men were initially given hand carts so that they could start small businesses. Many started to understand how important it is to plan ahead and equip themselves with livelihood skills and establish development projects for their community by themselves.



Health clinics and education

Medical clinics with hygiene and cleanliness awareness programs are for the whole community but are primarily attended by women and children, so the focus has been on special education programs for adolescent girls, pregnant and postnatal women and screening for the elderly.



Life change

- Educated children means dignified life choices, career paths and ways out of poverty, enabling them to fulfil their dreams
- Community has self-respect, having worked hard to get a school for their children and vocational training for adults to improve economic prospects
- Improved health and wellbeing, as the school offers hygiene education for the whole family



Principal Rekha's Story

My heart is full of pride as I talk about my staff and students at Smile Kids School. The children come excited every day and the parents kept asking us when the school would open again during the pandemic, and yet they never wanted or considered an education for their children before 2015. Legal documents to admit children officially has always been a challenge and parents were reluctant to release their only free source of labour. Now parents make great efforts to prepare the required documents from the various government offices. The changes that they see in the lives of their children makes them willing to do everything possible to keep them in school. Thank you.



Chandani's Story

I am married and have 2 children who attend Smile School. My husband and I toiled hard everyday to earn money but we struggled to save anything extra for emergencies. I joined a Self-Help-Group (SHG) where we were encouraged to start saving. I borrowed INR10000 (approx. AUD180) from the SHG to start a small scale business at my home that helps me to earn the amount I need to meet my family's basic needs. Now I do not have to go out and pick rags or find daily labour wages but I can spend my whole time at home with my children as I run my shop. I am so thankful for the opportunity to be part of this project and for the free education for our two children. Once I complete the tailoring course I hope to be even more self-sustainable.

