

Community Based Learning Centres



The Kotra Block of Rajasthan in North West of India has a big tribal population that is dependent on agriculture. They are marginalized and have a low status, which makes them particularly vulnerable. Some of the critical issues and problems that act as a barrier for children from these tribal families to pursue their education are:

Location of schools: These are far, forcing children to travel a great distance. Girls, especially, are not allowed to go to school due to threats such as wild animals and assaults.

Economic situation of parents: Tribal people are so poor that they do not desire to spare their children of their labour power in order to attend school.

Lack of awareness about the benefits of education: As education does not yield any immediate economic return, parents prefer to engage their children in remunerative employment to supplement the family income.

Unfamiliar language: The language used by teachers at school often prevents children from absorbing class room teaching as they speak and understand a different dialect.

Teacher absenteeism: In the remote tribal areas, non-attendance of teachers affects the quality of education.

Aim



To restore the educational rights of nearly 5000 out of school children in the age group of 6–14 years from the indigenous community living in Kotra block of Rajasthan and to improve their literacy skills (reading, writing and basic mathematical skills).



Vision and Approach



ChildFund's vision is to provide marginalized children access to learning opportunities, by addressing factors that have kept them out of education for generations. This is done by setting up learning centres managed and monitored by the community beyond the boundaries of a regular classroom, equipped with age and grade appropriate learning materials and trained instructors. The program tries to reintegrate children

into formal education and engages local authorities, community members and parents to take an active part in the education of their children. The learning centres serve to engage with local authorities, community members and parents to raise awareness and increase participation in their children's education.



Target areas:

Kotra block of Udaipur district in Rajasthan



Beneficiaries:

Nearly 5000 out of school children in the age group of 6–14 years



Project Period:

2 years



Highlights



- Classes are organized for batches of 20 out of school children three times a week. Instructors focus on strengthening children's basic reading skills through ChildFund's 14 week reading improvement module called Skills Targeted Academic Growth (STAG). It supports children with poor reading skills in graduating from reading small words to simple one page stories.
- Instructors gradually shift to other subjects such as math and science. The children's progress is recorded and updated every month. It is shared with parents and community members during community meetings and counseling sessions, encouraging them to mainstream the children in formal schools.
- The program provides supplementary support to children who go to school but need extra help.
- Project staff interfaces with local school teachers and sensitizes them about the needs of the children from tribal communities.
- For the overall development of children, the centre organizes many other activities beyond academic education such as sports, dance and leadership development together with events around "child rights week" and literacy days.
- Separate, secure playing spaces for girls have been developed.
- Portable toilets have been installed to inculcate good hygiene and sanitation habits among children.
- Parents receive group counseling to understand children's development at various life stages. The project also strengthens local governing bodies to demand schools near their villages as stated in the Right to Education Act.





- Relentless advocacy efforts in three villages within Udaipur District on access to education have resulted in the recruitment of one teacher by the district authority, who will teach in Rupani village, thus providing vitally needed educational support to the community.



- Within one year, over 40% of children attending the learning centers have demonstrated improved learning outcomes. The project has brought improvement in writing abilities of more than 70% of the children. At least 80% of the children are able to recognize numbers and solve basic maths problems.
- Almost 70% dropped out students have re-enrolled in two schools, namely Kodarmal and Rupani.

