

**Enrolment of 100 Girls from disadvantaged family to Vatsalya School in
Rural Rajasthan**

A Grant Request

Submitted to
Global Giving

Submitted by



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Vatsalya

Vatsalya began a life project by name of Vatsalya Udayan in 2002. This is a residential program for orphaned, abandoned and destitute children. At any point of time there are about 60 children living under our care and protection. The children live with us till they are 18 years by which time they are provided education and livelihood skills that enable them to lead a life of independence and dignity as an adult. So far the program has benefited over 400 children through its residential care alone.

The School at Vatsalya Udayan

We built a proper school this year in this residential campus with support of friends and partners from all over the world*. The school is meant to accommodate 200 children when it is complete, however in its present capacity we can have 120 children. Out of these 120, about 60 are the ones who live in the campus and about 60 seats are for children from the villages around, belonging to poor farmers and construction laborers' families. There are 6 full time teachers to teach students of Grade 1st to Grade 9th. Two other teachers come on weekends to teach Hindi, Sanskrit and Environmental Science and 6 University Graduates volunteer 5 hours every Saturday and Sunday and teach Math, English and Science to our children. We recently set up an IT lab in the school and equipped it with LCD projector, computers and internet device and since last two months, our children are being taught Science, English and Social Science through Skype by volunteers from London, California and New York as well as Mumbai, Bangalore and Pilani in India. The process is on to connect our school with two schools in Ireland and New York which will be another way to make world class learning possible for our children even when they sit in a simple remote village with nearest bus stop at least 4 km away. We continue to explore and use innovative teaching methods to give a real and deep understanding of a subject to the children. Four of our children have topped the merit list at block level twice so far!

The Academic Session 2012-13

With the basic structures in place, we are focusing on improving the quality of education and increasing the coverage this year. A pamphlet (copy attached) is being distributed in 20 villages in the vicinity of 5 kilometers of Vatsalya Udayan as we work to enroll children for the session 2012-13 that begins in July. The new session begins in July here and so we would begin our community mobilization drive by first week of April. We are determined to have 120 children next session and 100 of which are to be girls. We are focusing on Making School Education Accessible and Relevant for Girls this year!

The Rationale: Education Policy V/s the Reality on Ground

In March 2011, Government of India enacted the Right to Education as the Fundamental Right making it mandatory for parents to ensure that their children between age 6 and 14

years receive proper school education. This has been a welcome step, much needed and awaited; however, there are deep rooted cultural and social factors that prevent the benefits of this new policy to reach a girl child in India, especially in rural parts of Rajasthan. A girl child here is treated by her parents and rural community often with discrimination. According to the traditional rural family in India even today, the role of woman is that of taking care of household. Thus, while the boys are encouraged to go to school, little girls of age 8, 10, 12 years are retained at home to do the household chores and look after their younger siblings. In conservative rural society, the 'honor' factor is still supreme in context of girls. Any action; deliberate or accidental affecting a girl's image negatively is considered a blemish on the family honor and so the parents would resort to a simple and noncontroversial action which is to simply to retain them at home. They have to discontinue their schooling as soon as they hit puberty and are married off as soon as they are 15-16. According to a DFID study social and environmental factors in Rajasthan villages are very antagonistic to girls between 11-18 years resulting in a very poor literacy rate in the state. The study further reveals that:

- Rural female literacy is as low as **4.2%** in desert district of Barmer and **16%** in Alwar (Alwar is 100 km from Achrol where we are located)
- About **45%** girls are never enrolled in a school in Rajasthan and only about **9%** complete their education up to 10th grade
- More than **55%** of girls aged between 11 to 18 years are required/forced to help in economic activities of their family
- Up to **90%** mother and **58%** fathers are illiterate in rural Rajasthan whose girls are never sent to school or drop out after 5th grade
- About **63%** parents do not aspire for their daughters to study more than upper primary due to distances of the secondary schools
- More than **31%** of girl's cohabitates before they are 15 years of age. (Vatsalya study, 2004, Barmer, Rajasthan)
- Only **2 out of 5** women in India can read or write. The dropout rate of girls up to primary school and upper primary school is **41.3 % and 58.6 %** respectively
- While the Right to Education (RTE) Act-2009 mandates that there should not be more than "40 students per teacher" in a classroom, as per survey data compiled by a Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) wing recently, the ratio goes as high as **115 students** per teacher in some schools.

Solution- The Strategy

The above scenario calls for special interventions to change the status. Changing mindsets is not as simple as formulating a policy or passing a law is. Laws and policies can facilitate the process of change but the real change comes with the change of mindset. Empowering communities with ability to work towards positive growth requires three major inputs: Direction, Autonomy and Support. While the government initiative to make education a fundamental right has given the necessary direction and autonomy to the states and the system, the community needs support to implement this change. The fears and apprehensions of parents regarding 'what if something happens to my daughter' needs to be addressed.

They need to be assured of safety of their daughters. Also, their trust in the education system in its relevant and significance in improving the quality of life needs to be demonstrated to them. We believe that by addressing their fear about safety of their daughters; both within and outside the school premises and by addressing their concerns about the value of education in improving their daughter life, we can change their negative attitude towards education of their daughters.

Solution- The Remedy

What we have at Vatsalya- Udayan campus is a good facility for children to learn and grow and move towards a productive life, however, another reality is that we are located in demographic conditions which are very unfriendly and often hostile to its girl. Our school is surrounded by villages and hamlets ranging from a distance of half to five kilometers and difficult terrain. Parents are hesitant to let their daughters walk long distance to go to school. If we arrange for a **Safe School Transport** for their daughter, most parents will be ready to send their daughters to the school. We have firm belief that if the problem of transportation is addressed, the enrolment of girl child in our school will significantly increase. Another important input would be building **Extra Toilets for Girls**. The school premise has four toilets as of now, two for boys and two for girls. We propose building two extra toilets for girls. For a continued and quality teaching, we would require books in our library and books for each child. Lastly, supplementary nutrition is very essential for Indian girls as more than 80 per cent girls of Rajasthan suffer from malnutrition and, it will ensure regular attendance of girls in the class.

Budget

Item	Details	INR	USD
Bus	Commuting girls from home to School @20000 per month for 9 months	180000	3600
Midday meal	Midday meal for 100 girls @Rs 300 per month per girl for 8 months	240000	4800
Toilet for girls	Toilets construction in the school for girls	40000	800
Books	Purchasing Books for girls and library	30000	600
Total		490000	9800