Girls Not Bride: Thar Extension of Global Campaign to End Child Marriage

First quarter report to the donors and the Global Giving platform.

November 2014

Urmul Trust
Acknowledgement

Dear donors, we take this opportunity to earnestly thank you for your support and faith in the GNB: Thar Extension project, and we hope we’ll keep getting your support and that you’d be able to spread the word on the project and the larger issue – perhaps a very serious concern globally.

With the support of help from all you donors, we could incept the project in the two districts and begin the comprehensive long term social advocacy in the target areas. We’d particularly like to thank the Phelp family of Middleton, Wisconsin (Carol & Andy Phelp), who have generously helped with a 3000 USD grant which helped the project crucially – their support helped us keep the project on the GG platform. We hope to raise more resources and upscale the efforts for this project, both online and offline. With this note, we also take the opportunity to invite you all to the field areas in the the Thar desert of Rajasthan, India, to A brief report for your pursual.

Sincere thanks again,

Arvind Ojha

Secretary,
Urmul Trust
Theory of Change for the project

If local leadership, and key community groups are mobilized, trained, educated, and sensitized about the ills of the social malpractices such as child marriage and communicate the messages about the same to their communities, then the constituents of the communities shall witness a marked improvement in the qualities of their lives.

Executive summary

‘Girls, Not Bride: A Thar extension of Global Campaign to end Child Marriage’ is an ongoing endeavour to strengthen girl, the dignity of the girl child and her status in the Desert of Thar in India. The project seeks to motivate a sustained behaviour change towards girls in the community with special reference to stopping child marriage and continuing school education. It is aimed at developing a network of organisations, people, ideas, support system, in the region to support the interventions to reduce the vulnerability through social protection, access to education for girls and community mobilisation.

Already operational in two of the largest districts of India, the project has made long lasting impact in the target villages – 60 so far. With support from various individual and institutional donors, the project has been logging two successful years. The first year was supported by UNICEF India, while the second year has been possible because of individual donations at Global Giving. In the months to come, we expect to upscale the project with additional funds raised at GG, and also securing a grant from UNICEF to continue the second phase. Of course these would be different areas in the two districts, addressed through the two funds.

The project in the last quarter has achieved significant milestone – not just on the ground but at the state level too. The government on the international day of girl
child on October 11, 2014 awarded over a dozen girls from the two districts, part of the project. (details annexed). This has been a great motivator for the team, and also the villages these girls represent.

From village level to policy level, regular meeting, orientation, capacity-building workshops were organized by Urmul Trust. In this quarter 70 police officers were oriented for their role to prevent child marriage. For strict enforcement of law, we closely work with judiciary system and organize workshop for advocates and judges. 40 advocates of the project area participated in the prevention of child marriage workshop.

Similarly the project ventured on intervening in the school dropouts and get more girls enrolled at school. We worked with School Management Committees and teachers in workshops, follow-up meetings. The showed good results. Parents, convinced, now happily send their daughters to school and also participate in various events on prevention of child marriage. More than 1200 girls directly participated in various programmes organized by Urmul, held at different locations, on International Girl Child Day this year.

**URMUL Trust and its commitment to eliminate Child Marriage**

URMUL Trust understands that a strong and indigenous drive towards a comprehensive development can be initiated and innovated from within the communities alone. Until the community adopts and initiates a change from within, efforts cannot be superimposed and to initiate this effort, it is essential that all sections be empowered and opportune. This draws an immediate impetus to enable a voice for women in the Thar. This also, simultaneously, brings in the need to work with the powerful sections to dilute and decentralise the traditional power silos, i.e. patriarchy, male dominance and caste and class biases. Its efforts germinate in the belief that true empowerment is possible only when men give women the space to be themselves and exercise their rights to being equal human.

In 2011, URMUL Trust pledged its partnership to the Global alliance, Girls Not Brides (GNB), to eliminate child marriage. It was a part of the first global strategy development meeting by The Elders at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
Engaging with adolescent’s issues, girl’s child rights, women issues have been overarching principles of Urmul’s overall activity for over twenty-eight years. It has engaged massively, both in service delivery - by organising education camps, running schools etc; and inspirational behavioural change by advocacy, capacity building of various stakeholders, use of media etc. Being a founding member of the Girls Not Bride campaign and network, the organisation has continuously been striving to align the child marriage issue as an overarching theme and concern in its different development programmes across the Urmul group of organisation and other development agencies in the western Rajasthan.

URMUL has strongly believed in the power of communication and its role in facilitating a positive change in the communities. Over the years, URMUL has developed an expertise at communications through its adept communications team. This team includes an in-house (autonomous) folk communications team, URMUL Gavaniyaar. The Gavaniyaar team through its puppetry, folk music and theatre has been playing a vital role in initiating attitudinal alteration. The team also includes a small crew of media professionals who use their mainstream media ideas and techniques to promote communications for various programmes. The team has been innovating and producing various IEC material – Films, Posters, Books, Newsletters etcetera, for enhancing information dissemination.

**Backgrounder**

*An estimated 10 million girls are married each year before they reach 18 years.*¹

*1 in 3 girl in the developing world is estimated to be married before the age of 18 years.*²

*Girls from poor families are nearly twice as likely to marry under 18 as girls from wealthier families.*³

Child marriage, defined as a formal marriage or informal union before age 18, is a reality for both boys and girls, although girls are disproportionately the most affected. About a third of women aged 20-24 years old in the developing world were married as children. It is a violation of child rights as it denies the child, whether a boy or a girl, the basic rights to health, nutrition, education, and freedom from violence, abuse and exploitation. It deprives the child of her/his

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¹. DLHS 3 (2007-2008)
². Population Council, 2004
⁴. Child Marriage: UNICEF Information Sheet
⁵. International Centre for Research on Women, 2007
childhood and limits freedom of choice. Child marriages undermine almost every Millennium Development Goal, and affect poverty, education, Health directly.

India has the highest absolute number of girl brides. Despite legalisation declaring 18 as the minimum legal age for marriage, the laws are not enforced and social, economic and cultural realities perpetuate the practice. 47% girls, according to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), 2005-2006, marry before the age of 18, i.e. nearly half of all young women in the country. Marry me later, a report on child marriages by Dasra (2014) says, India accounts for 40 % of child marriages globally. This is highest in the world.

The Global Partnership to end child marriage, Girls Not Brides has pledged to eliminate Child Marriage. It has recognized child marriage as an obstacle in eradicating poverty, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and improving maternal and child health. Child marriages are closely linked to early pregnancies and reproductive health implications, which further implicate into lowered potential of youth and perpetuate the vicious cycle of lowered potential in the society. It has been making efforts with governments of various countries, UN and civil society groups in its endeavour. Government of India, along with various civil society groups have pledged their support to this partnership.

The Government has issued several key policy statements and plans to eliminate child marriage, directly or indirectly. Various interventions by the state and civil society organisations have been devised to support the legislation to counter the impediment. There are various check mechanisms in place in counter child marriage, promote gender equality, empower women, promote maternal health and reduce mortality rates. However, the complexity of various factors and their interactions lead to occurrence and prevalence of child marriage. The strategies need to be redefined to address and eliminate the root cause of the problem and ensure child rights.

**Understanding the Thar Desert Context**

As per DLHS 3 (2007-2008) married women age 20-24 who were married before age 18 (%)
Total: 57.6, Rural 61.6, Urban 38.8
Only 23% girls (between 15-17) attend higher education.
Only 26% women, who have money, can decide how to use it.
Only 4.5% women (aged between 15-19) participate in decision-making

Rajasthan has the second highest incidences of child marriages in the country. Child marriages are deeply associated with the traditional and cultural norms of
the society, especially in the desert societies. These generational norms, overtime, have been intermixed with the limited socio-economic factors, formulating them deeper into the functioning of the societies.

The desert, especially, has an anomalous spread of resources and opportunities. Amongst these scattered opportunities, the feudalism and biases in the society create a further misbalance. With this socio-economic sub-text in the background, a girl is seen as the weakest link in the chain adding little to economic or social value. This leads to a latent animosity towards girls manifesting itself into child marriage, violence, exploitation and abuse. The varied causal factors are discussed here:

- **Patriarchy**
- Poverty
- Lack of Alternatives
- Lack of exposure and awareness

*First quarter reporting*

The team has successfully incepted the project; all the different stakeholders have been reached and are well looped in the project and the wider idea. Through visits, media coverage and presentations at top levels, the policy level stakeholders have also been thoroughly briefed, updated and utilised in the project. Some of the key achievements of the programme in the first quarter have been:

- 19 villages announce themselves child marriage free.
- 80 community leaders and religious leaders sensitized for BCC.
- More than 40 advocates and district level law officers participated in prevention of child marriage workshop.
- Around 70 police officer oriented about their role on preventing child marriage and safety of girls.
- More than 100 School management committee member and village level child protection committee members oriented about their role on preventing child marriage.
More than 3000 villagers oriented through Puppet show, Street play and speeches on based on child marriage prohibition act and its different provisions including the provisions of penalties to all who involved directly or indirectly.

Description of activities

To ascertain the objectives, the following activities are undertaken in the project area, in the two districts of Bikaner and Jaisalmer, under following broad categories. These cover 120 villages in the two districts.

A. On-the-ground sensitization and activation

The primary objective of on ground activation is to create an environment/space to initiate an engaging dialogue on the child marriage, school drop out, equal opportunities etc. Local folk songs, puppetry, plays are used in community shows for this.

Pic: 1, A community awareness event using folk media
B. Capacity building

The children need to be aware of their rights and duties in the domain of child rights. A multipronged approach to interact, expose, and train the youngsters, communities, other village stakeholders – including religious leaders, service providers during marriage (photographer, priests, cooks, etc), is followed in the project. This includes briefing about the rights, duties, and obligations of these people and also about the laws that they are bound with. Capacity building is an important tool to make aware, held accountable the youth and community members on forced/imposed choices.

Pic: 1, An interaction with school children

C. Advocacy at multiple level through events

Different stakeholders – mostly policy implementation people – need regular orientation and dialogue for effective implementation. Different event, meetings, workshops with these people like police officials, advocates, local government people and others, helps in creating a responsible and sensitive system for child marriage prevention.

Pic: 2, A districts level meeting with government and police
D. Regular meetings, follow-ups with different government and PRI agencies

Our on the ground team based at village level, block and district level, regularly keeps in touch with local governance and bureaucracy sharing the information, data, with each other, while also updating the officials on latest development. This helps in developing a synergistic relation towards a common cause. These meetings range from local village leaders to the member of legislative assembly and other executive officials.

E. IEC development and media exposure

A major focus of the communication strategy is to develop inspiring and informative communication material and ensure it reaches the masses – schools, government institutions, hospital (dispensaries) and finally the people.
F. Desert Resource Centre for child rights and child marriage

The idea of the desert resource centre on child rights is to have a central place where people could access with queries and information on child rights or its violation; seek material – legal or educational; get counselling or help in filing complaints etc. The desert resources centre based at Bikaner has been helping people on these, while also providing support to the social advocates in the region. It coordinates with various department including the police, women & Child welfare, department of health, department of education, social welfare department etc. The centre also runs the child helpline phone service in collaboration with Childline foundation.

Pic: 5, A mass awareness rally on International day for girls

Pic: 6, A girl speaking at a district event

Pic: 7, Health camp for adolescents girls
Tabulated data for each programme theme

**A. On-the-ground sensitization and activation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.no</th>
<th>Description of activity</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Puppet Shows and Street Plays</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>International Day of Girl Child-2014 celebration event</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Film Screenings</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Students &amp; teachers interaction</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**B. Capacity building**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.no</th>
<th>Description of activity</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>No. Of people participated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Life skills training for adolescents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Training of Policemen, official of department of Women and child development on women safety and related laws</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Training of Police officers (Special juveniles police units) on law related to children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**C. Advocacy at multiple level through events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.no</th>
<th>Description of activity</th>
<th>No. Of activity</th>
<th>No. Of people and children participated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Workshop for Advocates and police personal on child marriage and child trafficking prevention.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D. Regular meetings, follow-ups with different government and PRI agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.no</th>
<th>Description of activity</th>
<th>No. Of activity</th>
<th>No. Of people and children participated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Participation on PRI meetings</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sharing of data in various workshops/ function organised by Department of women and child development, Police etc.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E. IEC development and media exposure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.no</th>
<th>Description of IEC</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Posters on Prohibition of child marriage law</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>Among Adolescent groups, Schools, Health centres, Police stations and other community places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Brochure on government schemes</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>For awareness on different state schemes for poverty reduction and promoting women empowerment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Newsletter on child rights</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>Focussing on child rights, it is circulated among Children clubs and adolescent groups in the region.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
F. Desert Resource Centre for child rights and child marriage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical Help to children's</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shelter in government shelter home</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restoration (within the country)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rescue from abuse (Child labour, Violence, Child marriage)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sponsorship (Linkup with various government schemes)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Missing Children</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child Lost</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents Asking Help</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Emotional Support &amp; Guidance</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Information for various schemes and services</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some changemakers

18 years old Richa is doing her bachelor of arts. She is a resident of the village Dheerdesar in the Dungargarh block. When she was told 83.54% girls in Rajasthan are anaemic and there could be many easy ways to solve the issue – developing kitchen garden could be one. She immediately decided to begin with her home itself. She developed her own kitchen garden and started promoting the idea throughout. Other people in the village followed too. Richa is now a changemaker in the village, and advices young girls on child rights, ills of child marriage, importance of education etc. She contributes her time to the GNB project and participates in each of its activity in the village.

Manisha is all of 15 years old and she has already proved herself to be a star in the village. Manisha got several girls re enrolled in the school! Resident of Dheerdesar village, her shool is a co-educational school. Due to this many families anxiously keep their girls away from school, or drop of many after certain age. Manisha attended one of the advocacy meeting in the GNB project and understood the need for joining the girls to the mainstream
education, and how extension in education could be an important tool in preventing child marriage. She took on the challenge, and start on advocating the cause. She visited families with her friends and tried convincing the parents. Her efforts yielded results – brilliantly – and she got four girls re-enrolled. The girls are now studying in classes 6th and 7th.

There are many other girls from other villages who have been inspiring the girls and families in the same way. Girls from Benisar village - Suman and Uchav, Poonam and Kanta have also done remarkable work.

Bhanwari, aged 16, studying in class 10, is from Benisar village. She has a very impoverished family yet her family has always supported her education and encouraged to excel. However the relatives haven’t been very cooperative, and always made comments on her going to school. They’d say what worth is it to invest in a girls education. Bhanwari remembers, she attended a youth meeting under the GNB project, where the resource person talked about various government schemes - including employment guarantee act, and other schemes which promote girls education. She got very inspired with all the possibilities and became an advocate for the project. She prepared a list of 25 most vulnerable families in the village, and followed the matter up. She ensured – with support of project team, that all these families get the NREGA (employment guarantee act) card issues so they get some work. One of the persons in these 25 was also her uncle, who used to be the troublemaker. His perspective to girl education changed as a result and now he sends his daughter to the school as well.
धूमधाम से मनाया दिवस बालिका दिवस, प्रतियोगिताओं का आयोजन

‘बालिकाओं के प्रति सोच बदले’
बालिकाओं और प्रवर्तनों का समारोह

शिक्षित बालिकांं लाएं: समाज में बढ़ाने

#PressCoverage
कृतियों पर प्रहार करने की जरूरत-डोगरा

कार्यक्षेत्रों अंतरराष्ट्रीय बालिका दिवस का आयोजन, बालिकाओं का किया सम्मान

सीएनआर किन्तूर, बीवारी
आजादी सिक्के बाजी में नहीं हरमी किस्में में सकल चाहिए। हमारे समाज में ऐसी किस्में हैं जिन्हें आजाद होने की आवश्यकता है।

इसी भावना को प्रभाव में निकल परिवह समारोह में निकल प्रदर्शन एक इमारत ग्रुप के संस्थापक नायकों के संबंध में आयोजित, कितने संस्थापक 'अंतरराष्ट्रीय बालिका दिवस-2014' पर उपस्थित।

जिला कल्याण आदिवासी गांव की आवश्यकता में इसे आक्रोश में हरे बालिका से उन्नत बालिका से लेकर, विभिन्न तकनीकों के माध्यम से बालनिवास प्रचार, बच्चों को प्रशिक्षण, अभिनव सीमित कृतियों पर प्रवास।

श्रीमद्भासु उपाध्याय की स्वागत गुप्ता का अन्तर्दृष्टिय इनिया बालिकाओं पर जिला कल्याण ग्रुप का प्रतिष्ठित ग्रुप कल्याण ग्रुप के लिए एक समायोजक शब्द है। बालिका समाज की हिंदी में यह समाज बाल हिंदी के इतिहास अभियान कार्यक्षेत्र, तिमाही और किसी से उन्हें कोई जानता। उनके लिए बालिकाों का अभिनव समाज बालिका की स्वीकृति देने के लिए उन्हें एक सफल तरीके का इस्तेमाल करने की जरूरत है।

10 बालिकाएं सम्मानित

बालिकाएं सम्मानित जिला में अंतरराष्ट्रीय बालिका दिवस पर आयोजित आयोजन में संग्रह के संस्थापकों में 40 बालिकाओं को श्रद्धालु सम्मान दिया गया। इसमें सीएनआर किन्तूर की श्रीमद्भासु उपाध्याय के संग्रह की और और दूसरे सम्मानितों की 10 बालिकाओं के लिए इस रूप से सम्मानित किया जा रहा है। उन्हें अपने इतिहास में दिखाए जा रहा है। उन्हें दुर्घटनाग्रस्त बच्चों को बचाना चाहिए। उन्हें समाज के लिए बच्चा बनाना चाहिए। उन्हें समाज के लिए बच्चा बनाना चाहिए।

50 बेटियों को मिला लाड़ली सम्मान

पुणे, मुंबई जैसे नगरों में कृतियों पर प्रहार करने की जरूरत है। जिला में अंतरराष्ट्रीय बालिका दिवस पर आयोजित आयोजन में 50 बेटियां सम्मानित किया गया। उन्हें अपने समाज के संस्थापकों में दिखाए जा रहा है। उन्हें बच्चों को बचाना चाहिए।