



Grassroots Empowerment in Rural India
The GEN Initiative Ltd (GEN)

www.gen-initiative.org



The GEN (Grassroots Empowerment Network) and our NGO partner in India – End Poverty - work together to help the most disadvantaged achieve sustainable rural development by empowering villagers, and particularly improving the position of women and young girls. We work in the Alwar District of Rajasthan, where the population is made up of Meos who follow a form of Islam (70%), resettled Sikhs (10%) and rescheduled Hindu castes (20%).

Here are some of our achievements:



50+ is the number of impoverished villages we have reached in the Tijara Block, Alwar District, Rajasthan since 2010 – all rely on small scale agriculture and lack many basic services.



20 Village Development Groups (VDGs) have been created. VDGs are our model for bottom-up development and have made huge local impact by encouraging villager action and self help.

20

31%

31% is the literacy rate among women. There is also very low attendance at school by girls especially among the Meo people.

2,100 unschooled teenage girls have been reached so far over 8 years, through a 1 year informal education programme providing functional reading, writing, numeracy, health and nutrition, art, sport, horticulture and sewing skills, plus confidence building.

2,100

26

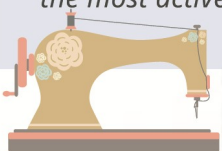
26 women's self help groups have been formed since the start of 2017 involving 217 members. More are in process.

In all members saved £3066 during the year with £541 borrowed to meet urgent family needs thus replacing high cost borrowing from money lenders.



250 Seamstresses have been trained in making handicrafts for income generation. 80 of the most active operate in 10 Centres and plans are in place to help them with creating an independent producer company.

250



24,500



24,500 Fruit trees have been distributed to 1500 small scale farmers to create small orchards which diversify their traditional cropping practices, use less water and make better use of the land.



Impact

2016 - We hit a milestone – Alwar Education Department now certifies our informal learning to level 2 of primary, giving girls the option to join formal education or some other form of learning.

Village Development Groups and other village initiatives have achieved new toilet blocks, better roads, more water pumps, safety fencing for wells as well as a range of farming improvement initiatives.

Girls literacy has increased their self-confidence and respect in the community with life changing impacts that include, contributing to life on family farms and discovering systematic underpayments for milk and successfully claiming refunds.

The teachers who provided literacy have become respected leaders in their communities.

Income from livelihood activities has enabled families to send their children to school and to tackle family health problems.



How can you support GEN's work?

*£1000 pays for a 1 year catch up education class for 25 unschooled teenage girls = £40 per girl.
£350 trains 100 farmers in orchard development. £7 buys 1 farmer 45 fruit tree saplings.*

Make a donation through

<https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/GEN>. GEN website: <http://www.gen-initiative.org/>

Join our mailing list to receive further information.

Please Contact Sue Burke, Chair of GEN for more information sue@gen-initiative.org