

Football To Eyeball

The Unique Movement To Empower Girls For Blindness Eradication Efforts.

This unique program uses Football as an ice breaker to negotiate opportunities for young girls. Through this program young girls between the age of 12-16 are nurtured by Akhand Jyoti Eye Hospital to aspire to become a professional footballer or Optometrist or both. This signature program is instrumental in targeting gender based inequalities, exploitation, child marriage all of which afflict girls in provincial Bihar; in short, provide equal opportunities to them.

The program works on a hub and spoke model wherein football plays a crucial role as an instrument of change. The program works on the principle of “Teach football to the girls and draw them out of their homes.”

Akhand Jyoti Eye Hospital’s base centre – a 350 bedded complete eye hospital and Eastern India’s largest eye hospital, works as a hub for this program. The centre encourages the girls and trains them to become professional footballers or an Optometrist or both.

The spoke is the girls living in most deprived areas of the state. Football is introduced as a sport to these girls by periodic planned intervention under the supervision of a physical instructor. Once a girl develops an interest in the sports, we select such girls to join full time and reside at the hostel facilities within the base hospital centre. The entire cost of education, training, and living is undertaken by Akhand Jyoti Eye Hospital with an objective to create these girls as a role model for future social impact.

The girls can simultaneously opt for a 4-year Bachelor course in Optometry after completing their standard XII (A level). A qualified optometrist after that can choose to practice at the hospital or at her clinic. This qualified Optometrist can easily earn at least 20 times more than the per capita earning of the rural families in India, creating significant opportunities in livelihood and improving gender parity in the society.

The following table highlights the cost of educating a girl through the 'Football To Eyeball' program to become a qualified optometrist across a span of 6 years:

Cost Breakup	Year 1 (\$)	Year 2 (\$)	Year 3 (\$)	Year 4 (\$)	Year 5 (\$)	Year 6 (\$)	Total (\$)
School / Optometry Board Fees	30	30	518	518	518	518	2131
Private Tuition Fees	24	24	-	-	-	-	47
Football Kits/Coach	30	30	30	30	30	30	178
Meals	622	622	622	622	622	622	3730
Books & Education Stationery	15	15	118	118	118	118	503
English Program	7	7	15	15	15	15	74
TOTAL	728	728	1303	1303	1303	1303	6663

TOTAL AVERAGE ANNUAL COST PER GIRL
\$ 1,111

It takes USD **1,114** per year per girl for a period of **6 years** to transform her into a qualified optometrist.