

# Leveraging Community and Government Resources for Gender and Educational Equity in India:

## A Case Study of Educate Girls



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 RESULTS FOR  
DEVELOPMENT

May 2019

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Government Resources for Gender and  
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# FOREWORD

Educate A Child's (EAC) primary objective is to contribute to significant and positive change in the lives of millions of out of school children (OOSC) through quality primary education. Our focus is on action; on as large a scale as possible. Action is meaningless in relation to impact, however, unless there is a robust assessment of lessons learned from our efforts undertaken.

Educate Girls is an Indian non-governmental organisation (NGO) that has been partnering with EAC since 2012. It works in states where the gender gap is pronounced and in communities that are marginalised due to poverty and other circumstances. Educate Girls' primary objective in working with EAC was to employ a model that focusses on community ownership and "mindset change". Educate Girls significantly exceeded the enrolment target that it had set for itself demonstrating that the various elements of their model, when thoughtfully combined, can make a difference.

This case study points to several key findings, including:

- Through door to door surveys with young community volunteers Educate Girls helped to make out of school children count;
- Frequent and detailed awareness raising and community engagement broke down cultural barriers and changed local norms regarding girls education;
- Mobilization and using a range of resources facilitated both reach and sustainability; and
- Partnership and advocacy improved infrastructure, retention, and learning.

Other key findings from the case study included the eventual value of EAC's co-funding model and "non-earmarked" funding to serve as a catalyst and anchor for other funding that has been critical to Educate Girls growth and impact. EAC's focus on counting OOSC facilitated the further development of the use of technology in relation to monitoring and data systems, and, ultimately, data-driven decision-making.

EAC is pleased to share this information with you. We hope that this publication will provide food for thought, at least, and at best, considerations for how to improve our efforts to change the lives of OOSC. EAC, Educate Girls, and Results for Development (R4D), would welcome any feedback.

Mary Joy Pigozzi, PhD  
Executive Director, EAC  
May 2019

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# ACRONYMS

BO	Block Officer
CTS	Child Tracking Survey
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
EAC	Educate A Child
EG	Educate Girls
FC	Field Coordinator
GKP	Gyaan Ka Pitara (repository of knowledge)
GSS	Gram Shiksha Sabha
IA	Internal Audit
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MM	Mohalla Meeting
MoE	Ministry of Education
OBC	Other Backwards Class
OOSC	Out of School Children
PMS	Performance Management System
R4D	Results for Development
SC	Scheduled Caste
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMC	School Management Committee
SMV	Site Monitoring Visit
ST	Scheduled Tribe
TB	Team Balika

## I. INTRODUCTION



Globally, education outcomes have improved dramatically in the past several decades. However, 61 million primary school aged children remained out of school as of 2014, with a disproportionate share from poor households<sup>1</sup>. While global averages point to gender parity in school participation at the primary and secondary levels, they mask massive gaps. Sixty-two million girls between the ages of 6 and 15 are still out of school, with the highest concentrations in West and South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa<sup>2</sup>. In India, women and girls face numerous barriers that create a cycle of disempowerment, with Indian girls estimated to average less than four years of education in a lifetime<sup>3</sup>. As of 2012, the state of Rajasthan was home to nine of 26 districts across India with the largest gender gaps, with women and girls lagging behind men and boys in all spheres of life<sup>4</sup>.

The barriers underpinning these gaps, which contribute to lower levels of education among girls in India, are numerous. In addition to poverty, low household socioeconomic status, and historical discrimination against Scheduled

Tribe (ST), Scheduled Caste (SC), and Other Backwards Class (OBC)<sup>5</sup> children, these barriers include deep-rooted societal and cultural gender biases, early marriage, and distance to school and risk of sexual harassment and assault. School-level factors also affect girls' enrolment and learning, including poor school infrastructure, poor teaching and learning quality, late school entrance, and a lack of accurate data on the status of out of school children (OOSC).

To address barriers to girls' education in Rajasthan, Educate Girls (EG) and Educate a Child (EAC)<sup>6</sup> formed a partnership in 2012 to directly enrol and retain 64,000 out of school girls by 2018. They did so by using a model that emphasises community ownership and mind-set change through: 1. deployment of Team Balika volunteers; 2. a door-to-door survey to identify OOSC; 3. enrolment campaigns and community mobilisation; 4. strengthening School Management Committees; 5. Child-centric teaching and learning techniques and classroom support; and 6. Bal Sabha for the creation of girl leaders and life skills<sup>7</sup>.

Educate A Child (EAC) commissioned Results for Development (R4D) to conduct an in-depth case study to examine the approach of Educate Girls to overcome barriers and ensure that girls in rural India receive a quality education. By documenting and analysing Educate Girls' community mobilisation strategies and deployment of volunteers to address the needs of OOSC and challenge structural, cultural, and socio-economic barriers to education in India, it seeks to contribute to the body of global knowledge on solutions for OOSC. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

*Objective 1.* Distil and document how the programme has overcome key structural, cultural, and socio-economic barriers and/or constraints and identify factors that have had a stimulating effect and those that have had an inhibiting effect.

*Objective 2.* Document the lessons learned, decisions, strategies, processes, institutional mandates, and actors that have contributed substantively to the development, implementation, and success of Educate Girls.

*Objective 3.* Assess the type and size of resources – including human, institutional, technical, administrative, financial, and more – that have made the programme successful, and understand resources needed to further develop and refine the programme.

The case study is structured as follows: Section II describes the methods R4D used and the limitations of the study. Section III provides background on key barriers to girls' education. Section IV describes the approaches used by Educate Girls to address key structural, cultural and socio-economic barriers to girls' education (Objective 1). Section V presents the results of Educate Girls' approaches and contextualises these findings. Section VI discusses lessons learned from the EG model and factors contributing to the model's success (Objective 2 & 3); and Section VII analyses the value added and challenges that EAC support has presented to Educate Girls (Objective 3). Annexes include References and a list of individual interviews and focus groups.

1 World Bank, World Development Report 2018, 60

2 Ibid., 59.

3 Educate Girls, "Educate Girls Project Completion Report," 2010.

4 Assomull, Abdo, and Pelley, "Driving Grades, Driving Growth: How Private Capital in Education Is Increasing Access, Inspiring Innovation and Improving Outcomes," 2015.

5 Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backwards Classes are officially designated groups of people who have historically been disadvantaged socially and educationally in India.

6 Educate A Child is a global initiative aiming to significantly reduce the number of children worldwide who are missing out on their right to education. For more information, see <http://www.educateachild.org>.

7 See Annex II for a detailed description of the program model.



## II. CASE STUDY METHODS AND LIMITATIONS



This case study seeks to contribute to the body of global knowledge on solutions for OOSC by examining Educate Girls' model for addressing barriers to education facing girls in rural India to receive a quality education. It examines Educate Girls' operations in Rajasthan in the five districts of Ajmer, Bundi, Jalore, Rajsamand, and Sirohi from 2012 to 2017 (see Figure 1 for Map). In these districts, Educate Girls' programme was financially supported by Educate A Child (EAC), a global programme of the Education Above All Foundation aiming to significantly reduce the number of children worldwide who are missing out on their right to primary education<sup>8</sup>. The case study does not address Educate Girls' development impact bond in Bhilwara district or operations in Madhya Pradesh.

The study draws on a combination of methods, including desk review, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and a review of existing quantitative data. Documents in the desk review included existing reports, case studies, articles, and programme documents on Educate Girls. Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and direct observation were conducted during a field visit to Sirohi and Rajsamand districts in July 2017. The researchers conducted a total of twenty interviews and nine focus groups<sup>9</sup>. One limitation of the study is that the districts, programme sites visited, and stakeholders

for interviews and focus groups were chosen purposively, based on the feasibility of travel and availability of key individuals. Another limitation of the research is that only three focus groups were conducted in Sirohi, compared to six in Rajsamand, due to monsoon-related flooding in Sirohi at the time of the visit.

Qualitative data from interviews and focus groups were coded and analysed using Atlas ti software. The researchers also reviewed existing quantitative evidence of the programme's impact, including rigorous third-party research such as randomised controlled trials, as well as regular monitoring and evaluation data reported by Educate Girls to Educate A Child.

The study's key findings are based on the triangulation of interview and focus group qualitative data with desk review qualitative data, and with existing quantitative data from multiple sources. The sources of data are footnoted throughout the report. Since the study's qualitative data was drawn from a purposive rather than random sample of Educate Girls districts and stakeholders, the researchers have mitigated issues of representativeness where possible by examining data from all five districts within the scope of the study, and by triangulating interview and focus group data across stakeholder groups.

<sup>8</sup> For more information on Educate A Child, please visit <http://www.educateachild.org>.

<sup>9</sup> List of these interviews and focus groups are available on page 55.

### III. BACKGROUND



Globally, education outcomes have improved dramatically in the past several decades. A universal expansion in schooling saw gross primary enrolment rates increase from 68% in Sub-Saharan Africa and 47% in South Asia in 1970 to over 100% in both regions by 2010<sup>10</sup>. However, in 2014, there were still an estimated 61 million primary school-age children out of school, with a disproportionate share from poor households<sup>11</sup>. Even when children are in school, they are not necessarily learning. The 2017/18 Global Monitoring Report notes that 387 million children of primary school age, or 56% did not reach minimum proficiency levels in reading<sup>12</sup>.

Global averages point to gender parity in participation in primary and secondary education levels, but these averages mask massive gaps. According to the World Development Report 2018, 62 million girls between the ages of 6 and 15 years are still out of school, with the highest concentrations in West and South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>13</sup>

In India specifically, recent estimates indicate that women make up 68% of illiterate adults<sup>14</sup>. Beyond just illiteracy, though, a number of barriers confront Indian women, including pronounced gender inequality, sex-selective abortion, feticide, early marriage practices, dowry customs, and cultural biases, which taken together, create a cycle of disempowerment<sup>15</sup>. Indian girls are estimated to average less than four years of education

in a lifetime, with 40% leaving school before they reach the fifth grade<sup>16</sup>. Particularly in rural parts of the country, girls are often uneducated and unaware of their own rights. According to a 2014 UNESCO estimate, 8.15 million children ages 6 to 13 are out of school across India, with 7 million out of school in rural areas<sup>17</sup>. Of these 7 million, over 4 million are girls. Rural communities often lack awareness of the benefits, or even the concept, of educating girls. Only 55% of schools in India have girls' toilets and only 42% of teachers are female, factors that contribute to the immense challenge of enrolling marginalised girls<sup>18</sup>.

#### *Rajasthan*

In the northwestern state of Rajasthan, only 52% of women are literate, compared to 79% of men<sup>19</sup>. The state also has a high rate of child marriage, with 12.9% of girls marrying between ages 10 to 17, and 43.6% marrying between ages 18 to 20<sup>20</sup>. Rajasthan is also home to 9 of the 26 districts in all of India with the largest gender gaps, with females lagging behind males in all spheres of life. In education, boys outnumber girls at both the primary and the upper primary levels, reflecting a gender gap that starts with school enrolment. The gender gap becomes more pronounced at the upper primary level compared to the lower primary level, reflecting the challenges that girls face in relation to schooling as they reach adolescence.

<sup>10</sup> World Bank, World Development Report 2018, 58.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>12</sup> UNESCO, "Accountability in education 2017/8," xvi.

<sup>13</sup> World Bank, World Development Report 2018, 59.

<sup>14</sup> UNESCO, "Education Global Monitoring Report," 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Assomull, Abdo, and Pelley, "Driving Grades, Driving Growth: How Private Capital in Education Is Increasing Access, Inspiring Innovation and Improving Outcomes," 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Educate Girls, "Educate Girls Project Completion Report," 2010.

<sup>17</sup> UNICEF, "All in School Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children: A Situational Study of India," 2014, 21.

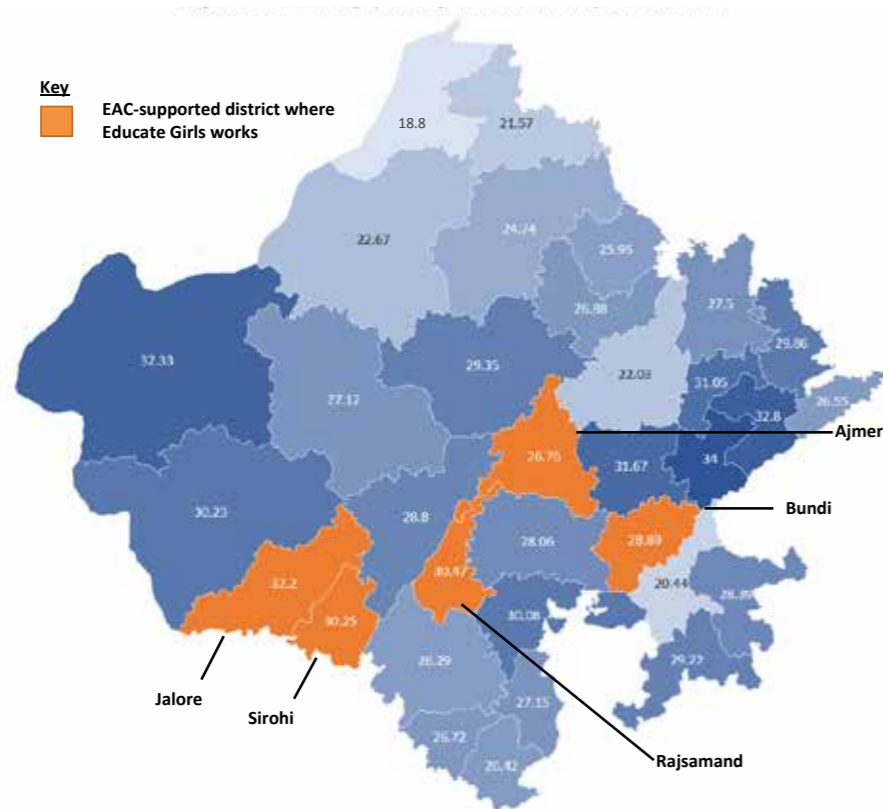
<sup>18</sup> Educate Girls, "Educate Girls Project Completion Report," 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Government of Rajasthan, "Districtwise Literacy Rate of Rajasthan," 2011.

<sup>20</sup> Pandey, Devesh "Highest incidence of child marriage in Rajasthan: report," 2017.



Figure 1. Gender gap in Rajasthan's literacy rates, 2011



Although the government has made some progress in girls' enrolment, a substantial gender gap remains. Educate Girls targets critical gender gap districts (see Figure 1<sup>21</sup>) in Rajasthan<sup>22</sup>, including Ajmer, Bundi, Jalore, Rajsamand, and Sirohi districts. Socio-economic, structural and cultural barriers to girls' education – whether in these districts, across the state, or nationally – are numerous, deeply ingrained and closely intertwined. These barriers interact to create an environment in which educating girls has

been the exception rather than the rule. To understand the success of Educate Girls with support from Educate A Child and other partners, it is critical to first examine the nature of these barriers to girls' education, especially as they manifest in the districts where the organisation works. Specific examples from Rajsamand and Sirohi districts, which were visited for this study, are also highlighted below.

### Societal and cultural dimensions of gender bias.

In remote and rural villages, deep-rooted societal and cultural factors contribute to the marginalisation of girls. Communities often take paternalistic attitudes, expecting male children to receive an education while girls must stay at home to take care of household chores<sup>23</sup>. A member of the EG leadership team reflected on this deep bias:

*I remember attending a village meeting for the first time. We asked the women, who were all veiled, to speak up. The minute they spoke, the men stood up and left, appalled that the women would dare to speak. I realised early on that challenges around girls' education are primarily mind-set issues. There was a school in the village, one kilometre away, and it was free – but there was no way that the community would send girls to attend it<sup>24</sup>.*

In Rajsamand, when ten mothers were asked whether they received an education as girls, three responded that they are able to write their names, while the rest were illiterate<sup>25</sup>. In Sirohi, a principal explained that community members expect that boys will move to larger cities and find good work, thus making their education worthwhile, while girls will get married and take care of the household, meaning that they are not worth investing in to receive an education<sup>26</sup>.

### Early marriage.

Many children in rural and remote villages are married before the legal age of 18 years. Many factors contribute to early marriage, including poverty, raising the economic and social status

of the family, pressure from older members of the family and community, religious practices, and ingrained belief systems. When asked the age at which they were married, mothers in Rajsamand said that they were so young that they do not remember – one mentioned that she was seven years old.<sup>27</sup> Once married, girls are expected to care for their husbands and in-laws, increasing the burden of household chores and making it more difficult to attend school. A principal in Sirohi explained that by cultural custom, almost all marriages are arranged, whether early or not.<sup>28</sup> Parents thus perceive risks in sending their girls to be educated outside of the home, especially during adolescence, because if a girl falls in love and decides to pursue marriage on that basis, then the community may refuse to recognise the relationship and ostracise her. This means that until girls are married, they are seen by some as a liability.

### Poverty and low socio-economic status.

Poverty and low socio-economic status of households further exacerbate the burden that girls bear. Especially when necessary for a mother to find paid work, girls must shoulder all household chores and duties. In Rajsamand and Sirohi, girls are expected to take care of younger siblings, wash and cook, and are often responsible for cattle grazing and agricultural work, a key component of livelihoods for families in rural and tribal areas, where economic conditions are poor<sup>29</sup>.

21 Figure 1 data comes from the Government of Rajasthan, "Districtwise Literacy Rate of Rajasthan," 2011.

22 Educate Girls also works in Madhya Pradesh, though this report focuses on Educate Girls' impact and accomplishments in Rajasthan, specifically in Educate A Child – supported districts.

23 Educate Girls, "EAC Technical Report January 2017."

24 Educate Girls Senior Leader 1 Interview, Mumbai, July 24, 2017.

25 Focus Group #4 Discussion, School Management Committee members, Godva, Khamnor, Rajsamand, Rajasthan, July 27, 2017.

26 Upper Primary School Principal, Interview #17, Sirohi, Rajasthan, July 28, 2017.

27 Focus Group #4 Discussion, School Management Committee members, Godva, Khamnor, Rajsamand, Rajasthan, July 27, 2017.

28 Upper Primary School Principal, Interview #17, Sirohi, Rajasthan, July 28, 2017.

29 Interviews #8, 9, 11, 16, 18. Focus Group Discussions #1, 4, 5, 9.

### *Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, and Other Backwards Classes.*

Children from Scheduled Tribe (ST), Scheduled Caste (SC), and Other Backwards Class (OBC)<sup>30</sup> families are at an extra disadvantage when it comes to education and most other realms of life. Out of 7 million rural OOSC in India, 12.7% are from Scheduled Tribes, 20.1% belong to Scheduled Castes, and 33.1% are Other Backwards Classes.<sup>31</sup> In Rajasthan, only 46.1% of elementary school age ST, SC, and OBC girls, and 43.1% of secondary age ST, SC, and OBC girls are enrolled in school.<sup>32</sup> The historical discrimination against ST, SC, and OBC communities has resulted in their reality as the most marginalised and under-served sections of society.<sup>33</sup> Many ST, SC, and OBC families face poverty, so children are obligated to contribute to household and livelihood responsibilities. Furthermore, as one government official in Sirohi noted, ST, SC and OBC communities have their own sets of beliefs and myths that can create additional barriers to education.<sup>34</sup> They also often speak local dialects that differ from the language of instruction, and ST, SC, and OBC parents are more likely to be illiterate and thus less aware of the importance of education for their children.

### *Safety and distance to school.*

Although typically every village will have at least one government primary school, and often a secondary school, which are located within several kilometres of most households, distance and safety concerns still prevent girls from enrolling and attending. One Educate Girls

volunteer recalled that she had to drop out after primary school because, “the government-run secondary school was several kilometres away, and my parents feared for my security.”<sup>35</sup> In Rajsamand, parents and community members cited fears that their daughters would be physically or sexually assaulted on the journey to or from school as a reason contributing to their decisions to keep girls, especially those of secondary school age, at home.<sup>36</sup> Stakeholders in Sirohi shared these concerns, also citing the distance of upper primary schools and security concerns as challenges.<sup>37</sup>

### *Lack of girl-friendly schools and infrastructure.*

Even when girls can get to school, the school environment is not designed to welcome them. In addition to poor general infrastructure, including a dearth of running water and electricity, many schools do not have boundary walls or separate toilets for girls, which can be both inconvenient and unsafe.<sup>38</sup>

### *Late entry into the education system.*

Given these cultural, social, and economic barriers, it is harder to enrol older girls in school. Stakeholders interviewed in Rajsamand and Sirohi note that in cases when girls successfully enrol in school late when they are already several grades behind, they face additional challenges. Many feel embarrassed to be studying with younger children, and as they grow older, societal pressures to marry and shoulder household responsibilities become more intense.<sup>39</sup>

### *Teacher shortages.*

A shortage of teachers, especially female ones, also contributes to the poor situation for girls' education. An estimated 60% to 70% of the schools in which Educate Girls works are single-teacher schools, where teachers single-handedly run classes in grades one to five and handle all administrative duties. With this level of responsibility, teachers have no time to seek out and enrol girls who are not in school, or to visit households when students drop out.<sup>40</sup> This teacher shortage can also affect education quality. To manage large class sizes, teachers may use more traditional and less effective teaching methods, such as rote memorisation, rather than participatory activities that actively engage children in learning.

### *Poor quality of learning.*

Once children are in school, they may not necessarily learn well, which in turn contributes to dropout. Learning may not occur for many reasons, whether because teachers are using outdated teaching methods, because girls are

already behind when they enrol, or because parents' lack of education means that they cannot provide a home environment that reinforces learning, or hold schools accountable for ensuring that children learn. As a result, only 42.5% of children in Standard III (Grade 3) across India are able to read Standard I-level text.<sup>41</sup> In Rajasthan in particular, only 23.7% of Standard III children are able to read Standard II-level text, slightly below the national average of 25%.<sup>42</sup>

### *Inaccurate government data.*

Finally, while the Government of Rajasthan is working to address educational barriers and conducts a Child Tracking Survey (CTS) to understand the status of OOSC, the census data upon which the CTS is based is often inaccurate and outdated. This negatively affects the government's ability to understand the nature and gravity of the situation of OOSC in Rajasthan as well as their ability to allocate resources to the highest-need areas.<sup>43</sup>

30 Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backwards Classes are officially designated groups of people who have historically been disadvantaged socially and educationally in India.

31 UNICEF, “All in School Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children: A Situational Study of India,” 2014, 21.

32 National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), “School Education in India,” 2016, 37.

33 Educate Girls, “EAC Technical Report January 2017.”

34 Government Block Elementary Education Officer, Interview #20, Sirohi, Rajasthan, July 28, 2017.

35 Educate Girls, “EAC Technical Report January 2017.”

36 Interviews #9, 10, 13 and Focus Group Discussions #1, 3, 4, and 5, Rajsamand, Rajasthan, July 26 – 27, 2017.

37 Interviews #17, 18 and Focus Group Discussions #7 and 9, Sirohi, Rajasthan, July 28 – 29, 2017.

38 Educate Girls, “EAC Technical Report January 2017.”

39 Educate Girls Senior Leader 2 Interview, Mumbai, July 24, 2017.

40 Primary school teacher interviews #8 and 11, Rajsamand, Rajasthan, July 26 – 27, 2017.

41 ASER Centre, “Annual Status of Education Report (Rural) 2016,” 43.

42 ASER Centre, “Annual Status of Education Report (Rural) 2016,” 55.

43 Educate Girls, “EAC Technical Report January 2017.”

The barriers to girls' education listed above are intertwined and need to be addressed holistically to make lasting progress. Educate Girls' programme approach leverages existing community and government resources to simultaneously address multiple barriers and work towards ensuring all girls are in school and learning well.

The EG programme interventions centre around the following key activities:

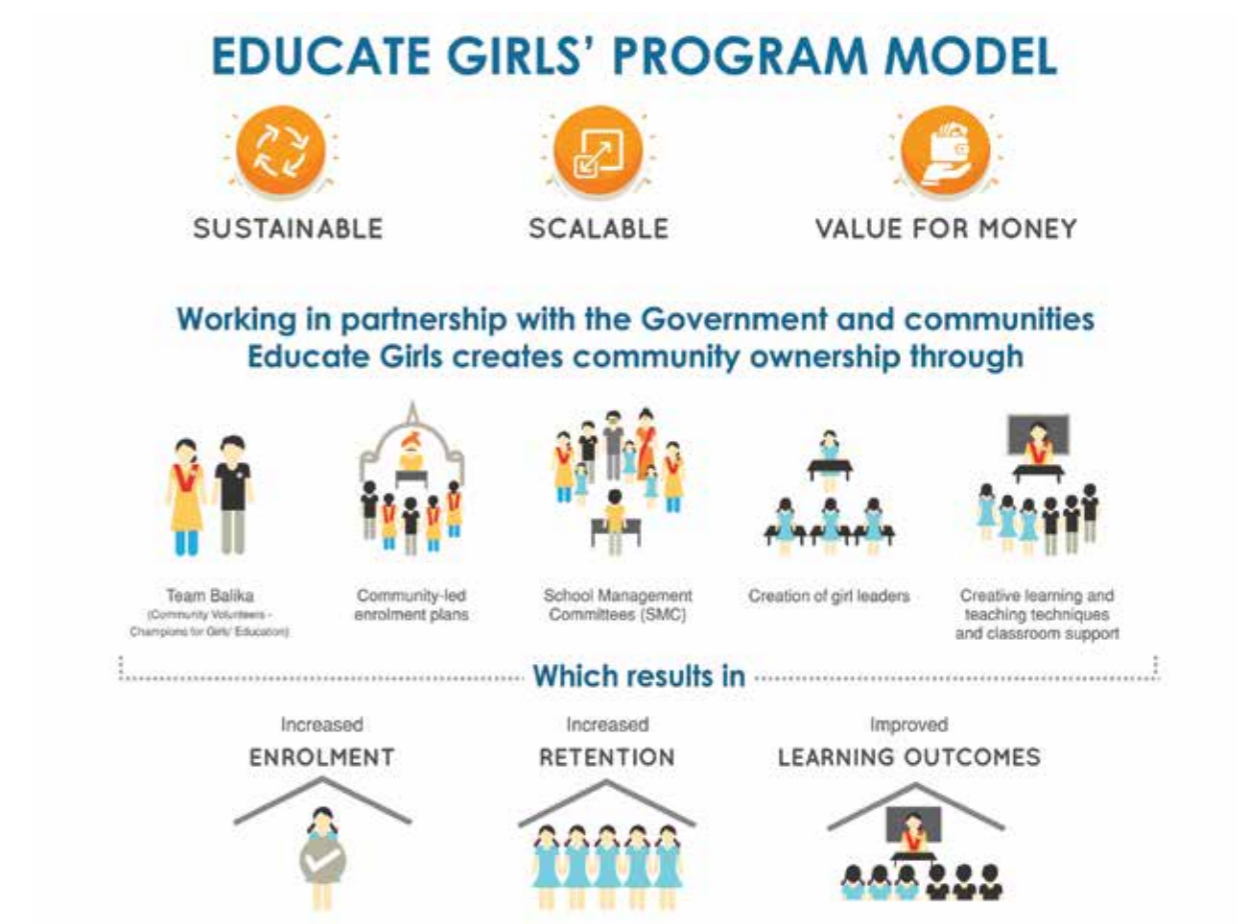
1. Recruitment, training and deployment of Team Balika volunteers as champions for girls' education

2. Conducting a door-to-door survey of every target village to identify OOSC
3. Undertaking intensive enrolment campaigns and community mobilisation through Gram Shiksha Sabha (village education meeting) and Mohalla (neighbourhood meetings)
4. Strengthening the capacity of School Management Committees
5. Providing classroom support through a child centric pedagogy and curriculum
6. Forming and training adolescent girl leaders to provide life-skills education through Bal Sabha

## IV. EDUCATE GIRLS' APPROACH



Figure 2. Educate Girls Programme Model<sup>44</sup>



<sup>44</sup> Source of graphic: Educate Girls, "Annual Report: 2016 - 2017."



### Deployment of Team Balika

The cornerstone of the programme approach is the recruitment, training, and deployment of a network of over 11,000 Team Balika volunteers to reach and engage with communities, government, households and individuals to champion girls' education and catalyse school reform in their villages. Team Balika (TB) are at the heart of Educate Girls approach. Through the efforts of Team Balika, Educate Girls aims to chip away at societal and cultural gender biases by convincing parents and communities that girls should receive an education.

Team Balika volunteers usually fall between the ages of 18 and 35, have passed either 10th or 12th grade, and are often the most educated people in their villages.<sup>45</sup> They are often high school or college students themselves and have grown up in or reside permanently in the villages where they work.<sup>46</sup> Team Balika are recruited for their strong commitment to girls' education, their

leadership and communication skills, and their interest and willingness to be trained by EG. One Team Balika is recruited in each village where EG works and each commits 25 hours per week to EG work, which is spent on teaching, life skills training, supporting SMCs to develop school improvement plans, conducting household visits in the community, and maintaining records.<sup>47</sup> Team Balika do not receive financial compensation, but receive extensive training, as well as branded supplies necessary for their work, including backpacks, notebooks, folders, t-shirts, and umbrellas.

Educate Girls views Team Balika as an investment with both immediate returns in enrolling and retaining girls in rural villages and long-term returns in creating "an army of motivated, educated young people" whose leadership and advocacy will improve girls' education.<sup>48</sup> The organisation provides an initial twelve-day, residential training for Team Balika, as well as frequent refresher trainings on community mobilisation and outreach,



Household Visit

45 Educate Girls, "Organisational Learnings."

46 Educate Girls, "EAC Technical Report January 2017."

47 Jain and Patni, "Conceptualization and Strategic Strengthening of Team Balika," 2017.

48 Educate Girls Senior Leader 1 Interview, Mumbai, July 24, 2017.

formation of School Management Committees (SMCs) and facilitation of SMC meetings, formation of Bal Sabhas, life skills training, and child-centred teaching and classroom practice techniques.<sup>49</sup> Interviews and focus group discussions with Team Balika reveal that in addition to teaching about areas critical to their EG work, trainings give Team Balika the chance to meet other motivated young people in their regions, to form friendships and connect with peers, and to build a sense of identity, purpose and self-esteem.<sup>50</sup> Parents, teachers and local leaders also indicate that Team Balika are respected within their communities for their commitment and voluntary work to improve the state of education in their villages.<sup>51</sup>

Team Balika volunteers interact repeatedly with parents and community stakeholders, building trust and solving problems that break down barriers to girls' education over time. The motivation of Team Balika and field coordinators to implement these activities

consistently and repeatedly, and their strong relationships with communities, have stimulated the effectiveness of Educate Girls' approach. Progress achieved by using these community mobilisation techniques is reflected in Educate Girls' enrolment and retention outcomes, as well as changing community attitudes towards girls' education and early marriage.

### Door-to-door survey

When entering any village for the first time, Educate Girls conducts a door-to-door survey. Originally, EG staff asked teachers and principals for lists of students and used the government's Child Tracking Survey (CTS)<sup>52</sup> data to identify out of school girls. Unfortunately, the CTS data is often inaccurate, with hard-to-reach hamlets sometimes omitted completely. Educate Girls enlisted Field Coordinators and Team Balika to conduct the organisation's own door-to-door survey to obtain better quality data and to hold the



Door-to-door Survey: 31 lac household across 9,400+ villages surveyed

49 Educate Girls, "Frequently Asked Questions: Our Program."

50 Educate Girls Senior Leader 1 Interview and Focus Group Discussion #8 with Team Balika volunteers.

51 Interviews #10, 11, and 16 and Focus Group Discussions #1, 4, 5, and 9. Rajsamand and Sirohi, Rajasthan, July 26 - 28, 2017.

52 The Child Tracking Survey is conducted to keep a record of all children ages 0 - 14, and to create a database of children by age, covering all households in the state of Rajasthan. It captures their names, ages, sex, caste, education status, and reasons for being out of school. (EAC Technical Report 2017)



organisation accountable to identify and reach girls most in need in rural Rajasthan.

Beyond better data, the door-to-door survey serves as Educate Girls' first opportunity to engage the community. A Field Coordinator and Team Balika in each village plot the location of out of school girls on a village map and profile, indicating the roads, infrastructure, and households of the village, and noting which households are more or less supportive of girls' education.<sup>53</sup> The door-to-door survey is therefore a diagnostic tool for generating a baseline understanding of the status of girls' education and community attitudes towards it in a given village. Conducting the survey provides the Field Coordinator and Team Balika with an opportunity to build rapport with the community,<sup>54</sup> and enables EG to target its approach to work more closely with particular segments of a village's population.<sup>55</sup> As EG goes household to household, Field Coordinators and Team Balika use the organisation's logo to mark every house where girls of school age live. Branding the entire village in this way conveys the seriousness of

EG's mission and creates a visible symbol of accountability in the community.<sup>56</sup>

Educate Girls crosschecks collected data with registration lists from schools, and asks village heads and headmasters to verify the names of never enrolled or dropout girls.<sup>57</sup> This step double checks the accuracy of EG's baseline and gives the community an opportunity to verify the data. EG's data sometimes exposes inflated enrolment rates in official figures, which the government is sometimes reluctant to acknowledge because it raises questions about the government's own performance in providing education. EG's process of verifying its data with community leaders also encourages government officials to accept the data as accurate.<sup>58</sup>

### Enrolment campaigns and community mobilisation

To mobilise communities to enrol more girls, Educate Girls organises and facilitates village education meetings and neighbourhood meetings throughout the year.<sup>59</sup> These meetings serve as a starting point to sensitise

communities to the importance of girls' education, and to create a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for education among village leaders, elders, school administrators, Educate Girls staff, and Team Balika.<sup>60</sup> Field Coordinators are responsible for organising Gram Shiksha Sabha (GSS), or village education meetings, which typically last three to five hours and include thirty to fifty people, and Mohalla, or "neighbourhood" meetings, which are smaller and take place at the level of hamlets within a village.<sup>61</sup> A saturation and clustering approach is key to EG's community mobilisation and enrolment campaign efforts. The organisation learned that for families to take action to enrol girls in school, geographically scattered engagement across the state would not work.<sup>62</sup> Early on, EG geographically clustered its efforts in three blocks of Pali district during its 500-school pilot, so that families and community members would hear the same messages and feed off of each other's changing behaviour. As it increased the number of schools and villages served, Educate Girls decreased the geographic area that it covered, allowing it to

"saturate" all the villages within the three pilot blocks.<sup>63</sup> According to a headmaster in Sirohi district, "the mentality of the people towards girls' education has changed, due to the community interactions and activities that Educate Girls has led."<sup>64</sup> Educate Girls is now starting to use a predictive tool to identify hot spots and clusters of villages more accurately using machine learning. The algorithm built with the door-to-door data and secondary data sets will identify where villages are with the highest prevalence of out of school girls.

### Strengthening the capacity of School Management Committees

Another key component of Educate Girls' model is the formation and activation of School Management Committees (SMCs). The Right to Education Act (RTE) mandates the formation of School Management Committees in all government elementary schools in India, envisioning them as the basic unit of decentralised governance with active involvement from parents in a school's functions.<sup>65</sup>



Community Mobilization

53 Educate Girls Senior Leader 5 Interview, Rajsamand, Rajasthan, July 25, 2017.

54 Educate Girls Senior Leader 1 Interview, Mumbai, July 24, 2017.

55 Educate Girls Senior Leader 4 Interview, Mumbai, July 24, 2017.

56 Educate Girls Senior Leader 1 Interview, Mumbai, July 24, 2017.

57 Educate Girls, "Educate A Child Initiative Funding Proposal," 35 - 36.

58 Educate Girls, "Educate A Child Initiative Funding Proposal," 35 - 36.

59 Educate Girls, "Frequently Asked Questions: Our Program."



Retention through improved school governance and infrastructure

60 Educate Girls, "Frequently Asked Questions: Our Program."

61 Educate Girls, "EAC Technical Report January 2017."

62 Senior Leader 1 interview.

63 Educate Girls Senior Leader 1 Interview, Mumbai, July 24, 2017.

64 Interview #16 with lower primary school headmaster, Sirohi, Rajasthan, July 28, 2017.

65 SMCs are constituted every two years, and generally consist of fifteen democratically selected members, including parents or guardians, school headmasters and teachers, and other members of the community, with a requirement that 50% of the members be female.

One of main roles of SMCs under RTE is the development and implementation of school improvement plans (SIPs), through which communities create and submit applications to the government for funding to improve the quality of infrastructure, educational facilities and learning outcomes in a school.<sup>66</sup> Improvements in schools brought about by SMCs range from fixing a leaky school building roof, to bringing electricity to a school, or getting funding to construct a playground.

Educate Girls conducts a one-day training for SMC members, covering SMC roles and responsibilities, the Right to Education Act and its rules, and the process for preparing and submitting School Improvement Plans.<sup>67</sup> In addition to this training, Team Balika and Field Coordinators engage continuously with SMC members throughout the school year to improve schools and quality of learning. By offering this support, Educate Girls activates a governance and accountability mechanism that is already in place, but often lying dormant in communities. As one female SMC member in Rajsamand recounted, “before, I was part of the SMC but I didn’t know what it did. I signed the register at a meeting, but that was it. Since the Field Coordinator started working with us, I am much more aware of the importance of education and able to contribute.”<sup>68</sup> According to a female sarpanch<sup>69</sup> in Rajsamand, “previously, SMC members would just sign a paper and declare that a meeting was held, but now, the panchayat is receiving many more proposals to improve schools in the area.”<sup>70</sup> By supporting School Management Committees, Educate Girls engages the wider community and parents in planning school improvement initiatives to

address the lack of girl-friendly infrastructure, safety, and distance to school barriers leading to increased enrolment, retention, and even quality of student learning.

### Classroom support through child-centric pedagogy

Despite short-term success in boosting enrolment, initial data showed that retention of girls lagged. To respond to retention challenges, Educate Girls introduced a new component to its programme, designed to boost the quality of learning occurring in rural schools, improve children’s attitudes towards school, and raise retention rates.<sup>71</sup> Previously called ‘Creative Learning and Teaching’ or CLT, and now called Gyan Ka Pitara (or Vessel of Knowledge), the approach involves a child-centric set of techniques and activity-based pedagogical tools to make learning interesting, engaging and playful.

Educate Girls developed its curriculum kit, which includes various games and activities for learning letter recognition, word formation, and maths, in partnership with Pratham,<sup>72</sup> UNICEF<sup>73</sup> and more recently Sol’s Ark.<sup>74</sup> It includes a “catch-up” methodology to ensure that children who are lagging behind or who may be newly re-enrolled can reach grade level, as well as a “peer group learning” methodology that emphasises peer group work and involvement in the teaching and learning process.<sup>75</sup> Team Balika implement the approach in Grades 3, 4, and 5 to improve students’ learning levels for English, Hindi, and maths, and EG tests students’ learning levels before and after the implementation.<sup>76</sup>

### Supporting girl leaders and life skills education through Bal Sabha

Alongside methods to engage communities, Educate Girls also gives attention to developing girls as leaders. Bal Sabhas, which are mandated under the government’s Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) scheme and Right to Education Act, are democratically elected girls’ councils comprised of thirteen elected girl leaders ranging in age from 10 to 13 years old in grades 6 to 8 of upper primary and KGBV<sup>77</sup> schools.<sup>78</sup> EG supports Bal Sabha formation by training girls elected to Bal Sabha on life skills, encouraging their participation in the development of their schools and communities, and building their self-esteem, confidence, and leadership skills through interactive games and activities.

Participating in Bal Sabha gives girls a leadership role within their schools, and once trained by EG, Bal Sabha members in turn train other girls in their schools, creating peer support and a positive learning environment.<sup>79</sup> When asked how they help others, one Bal Sabha girl replied, “when someone is not learning well, we help with learning activities in the classroom. If there is a fight between two girls, we can help resolve it.”<sup>80</sup> Added another, “if a girl is facing a problem, she comes to me for suggestions on how she can solve it.”<sup>81</sup> Supporting Bal Sabhas and providing life skills training is a part of Educate Girls’ strategy to deepen and sustain its impact, viewing girls as the long-term force that will take forward the work to advocate for education and opportunities.<sup>82</sup>

66 Educate Girls, “EAC Technical Report January 2017.”

67 Educate Girls, “EAC Technical Report January 2017.”

68 Focus Group Discussion #5 with School Management Committee members, Delwara, Khamnor, Rajsamand, Rajasthan, July 27, 2017.

69 Interview #10 Sarpanch, Kaliwas, Rajsamand, Rajasthan, July 26, 2017.

70 A sarpanch is an elected head of the panchayat, a village-level institution of decentralised self-government.

71 Dastoor, “Meeting the Challenge of Educating Girls,” 2015.

72 Educate Girls, “Frequently Asked Questions: Our Program.”

73 Pratham is one of the largest NGOs in India and works towards the provision of quality education to underprivileged children.

74 Sol’s Ark is a specialist education NGO in India with expertise in curriculum development for children with special educational needs.

75 Educate Girls, “EAC Technical Report January 2017.”

76 Educate Girls, “Frequently Asked Questions: Our Program.”

77 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya schools are educational facilities for girls belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, minority communities and families below the poverty line in Educationally Backward Blocks.

78 Educate Girls, “EAC Technical Report January 2017.”

79 Ibid.

80 Focus Group Discussion #6 of Bal Sabha girls, Nedach, Khamnor, Rajsamand, Rajasthan, July 27, 2017.

81 Ibid.

82 Senior Leader 5 interview.



## V. RESULTS



The main purpose of Educate Girls' activities as described above is to ensure all girls and boys in the target remote rural villages are enrolled in school and learning well. Drawing on evidence from third-party studies, self-reported monitoring and evaluation data, and qualitative data, this section analyses and contextualises the results that Educate Girls has achieved and identifies factors that have stimulated or inhibited Educate Girls' success in addressing key structural, cultural, and socio-economic barriers to girls' education.

Available data indicate that Educate Girls has achieved the following results:

- Made invisible out of school children count and create accountability for their education;
- Raised awareness and sensitised parents, community leaders, and government officials to change negative social norms and mind-sets on value of girls' education;
- Increased enrolment and retention among children in programme villages and schools;
- Improved infrastructure in programme schools;
- Improved retention and learning among students in programme villages

### **Making invisible out of school children count**

Since it covers every household in a given village, Educate Girls' door-to-door survey yields data that overcomes the inaccuracies of government data and does not contain sampling errors. The survey provides the data foundation upon which the organisation's accountability is based and achievements can be quantified. Because the survey covers all girls in a given village, block, or district, it is free of sampling error and thus important in

painting an accurate picture of girls' education in remote areas of Rajasthan. Village and school baselines in every community that EG targets enables it to plan and hold itself accountable for reaching all out of school girls in the community and for monitoring and reporting progress on enrolment, retention, and learning.

The door-to-door survey also functions as an important transparency and accountability tool with external partners and stakeholders. As the Global Education Monitoring Report on Accountability points out, "a shared purpose, which fosters trust, is central to effective accountability."<sup>83</sup> By sharing door-to-door survey data with communities and partners, Educate Girls helps align stakeholders to the shared purpose of educating girls, creating trust and enlisting them to make progress.<sup>84</sup> The door-to-door survey can also be shared with the ministry of education and other researchers as a valuable asset for additional analysis. Senior leaders at EG point out that the organisation could share its data with a broader constituency of stakeholders, including other researchers, to conduct additional analysis. As one senior leader notes, merging EG's data into existing databases could help to more clearly define the challenges around girls' education in Rajasthan by identifying trends or patterns across blocks and districts.<sup>85</sup> Another mentions the possibility of using this data to shed light on characteristics of gender gap hotspots, or to predict where gender gap hotspots might occur in other districts or states.<sup>86</sup> EG's leadership cites a lack of resources as an obstacle to leveraging the data in this way and points to partnerships with research organisations and unrestricted funding as possible avenues to maximize the potential of the data.<sup>87</sup> Recently Educate Girls has started

<sup>83</sup> UNESCO, "Accountability in education 2017/8," 2.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Senior Leader 2 interview.

<sup>86</sup> Senior Leader 1 interview.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

to create a predictive tool to identify hot spots with the highest prevalence of out of school girls, through machine learning.

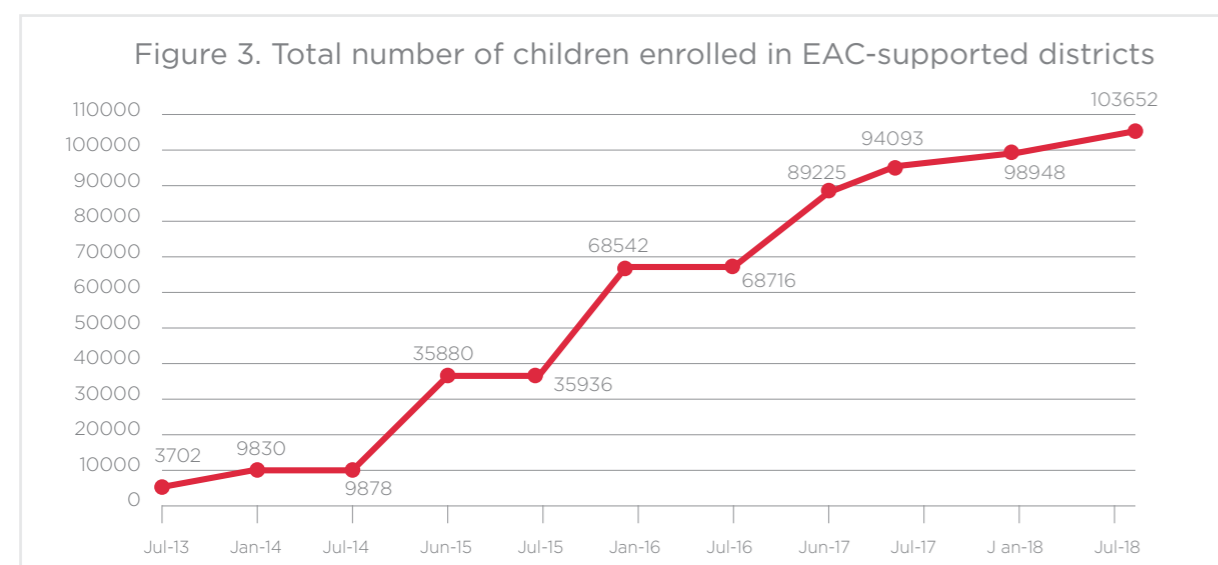
### Changing mind-sets on girls' education

Educate Girls aims to chip away at societal and cultural gender biases by convincing parents and communities that girls should receive an education by using community mobilisation activities that include repeated household visits by Team Balika and Field Coordinators and regular village education and neighbourhood meetings. These strategies create a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for education among village leaders, elders, school administrators, Educate Girls staff, and Team Balika. The motivation of Team Balika and field coordinators to implement these activities consistently and repeatedly, and their strong relationships with communities, have stimulated the effectiveness of Educate Girls' approach. Progress achieved through community mobilisation is reflected in changing community attitudes towards girls'

education and early marriage. In the Delwara block of Rajsamand, School Management Committee members pointed to fewer instances of child marriage in their community.<sup>88</sup> Mothers in the Khamnor block of Rajsamand expressed their wishes for their daughters to delay marriage until the age of 18 so that they can first receive an education.<sup>89</sup> Community members also noted changes in the attitudes of men, citing EG's efforts as the source of newfound awareness among men of the importance of educating girls so that they can become financially contributing members of the household.<sup>90</sup>

### Increased enrolment and retention of girls in school

Educate Girls' success in shifting community member attitudes and behaviours are also visible in the dramatic increases in girls' enrolment it has achieved. A clear pattern of success emerges regarding enrolment. Educate Girls' enrolment data indicate that by July 2018, it had enrolled 103,652 children (82,791 girls and 20,861 boys) in partnership with EAC, (see Figure 3).<sup>91</sup> While self-reported



88 Focus Group Discussion #4, School Management Committee, Rajsamand.

89 Ibid.

90 Focus Group Discussion #1, School Management Committee, Rajsamand.

91 Educate Girls, "EAC Technical Report July 2018."

monitoring and evaluation data do not address the counterfactual of whether girls' enrolment would have increased in EAC-supported districts in the absence of intervention, EG's proof of concept study suggests that enrolment would not have increased without EG's involvement. In 2010, the organisation enrolled 92.7% of girls who were out of school in treatment areas, compared to a 5% decrease in enrolment in control areas.<sup>92</sup>

Qualitative data reinforce that Educate Girls community mobilisation approaches helped shift attitudes and raise girls' education as a community priority. In Rajsamand, EG enrolled over 17,000 children in its first three years of operation in the district.<sup>93</sup> SMC members in Rajsamand cited an increased awareness of the importance of education in the community and enrolment of all girls in their village due to Educate Girls' efforts.<sup>94</sup> They noted that previously, no one in their village talked about the importance of education, but because of Educate Girls' efforts, all girls in their village are now in school.<sup>95</sup>

Qualitative data also suggest that communities are increasingly willing to support educational opportunities for girls beyond primary school. When asked how long girls would study for, parents in Rajsamand said that they would send their girls to residential secondary schools through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, rather than pulling them out of school after primary grades.<sup>96</sup> Under the influence of Educate Girls, some families in Rajsamand are already sending their girls to residential secondary schools, and expressed convictions that their daughters should study as long as they are able.<sup>97</sup>

92 Educate Girls, "Educate Girls Project Completion Report," 2010, 16.

93 Senior Leader 5 interview

94 Focus Group Discussion #4. School Management Committee members, Rajsamand.

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid.

Similarly, in Sirohi, several girls are already attending residential secondary schools, which community members noted has helped set an example for more families to follow and allay concerns about distance to school and safety.<sup>98</sup>

### Child-friendly schools: improved school infrastructure

Lack of girl-friendly schools and infrastructure is a barrier to enrolment and a cause for dropout. Educate Girls' efforts to activate and strengthen School Management Committees and support them to submit School Improvement Plans (SIPs) has helped address a lack of girl-friendly infrastructure and safety and distance issues, contributing to increased enrolment, retention, and even quality of learning.

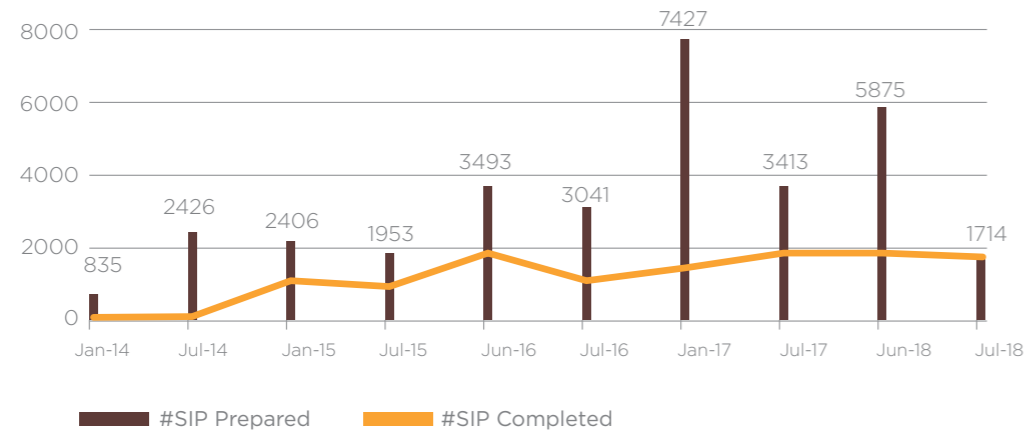
While not possible to distinguish between the impact made by SMCs from the impact of other components of EG's model on enrolment, retention and learning outcomes, it is possible to examine output data most directly related to SMCs. Based on self-reported monitoring and evaluation data, Educate Girls has supported SMCs to prepare and submit over 30,000 SIPs between 2014 and 2018 (see Figure 4).<sup>99</sup> To date, approximately 11,000 of these 30,000 SIPs have been processed and completed by government bodies responsible for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan,<sup>100</sup> yielding tangible improvements in school infrastructure. While unclear why only 35% of SIPs have been completed, it is possible that Educate Girls and communities have been able to submit SIPs at a greater volume than local government bodies can process, which could indicate the need for EG to work with local government partners to prioritize school improvements.

98 Focus Group Discussion #9, School Management Committee, Sirohi.

99 EAC Technical Reports submitted by Educate Girls to Educate A Child, January 2014 – July 2018

100 Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, or "Education for All Movement" is a national Indian Government program implemented in partnership with state governments to universalise primary education.

Figure 4. School Management Committee activation



In focus group discussions, SMC members credited Educate Girls for increasing their awareness of SMC functions and the power of the SMC to improve school conditions. One School Management Committee leader said, “four years ago, I did not know that the SMC existed – there was no community awareness of it. Since EG told us about our rights and ability to demand improvements to the school infrastructure, we now know how to bring about changes and get support for our school.”<sup>101</sup> As another SMC member pointed out, “four years ago, SMC meetings were held, but there were no School Improvement Plans and no work being done on the school. Now, we have proposals in the pipeline for drinking water, a playground, electricity, and fixing potholes.”<sup>102</sup> At another school, SMC members submitted a successful proposal to bring another teacher to their understaffed school, which had only one teacher covering five grades. These qualitative data, along with the output data reviewed above, suggest that Educate Girls’ support to School Management

Committees has strengthened them and addressed school infrastructure challenges to create a more girl-friendly learning environment.

### Improved student retention and learning outcomes

The ultimate aim of enrolling girls and boys in schools is the opportunity to stay, learn and complete the full cycle of primary education. EG’s in-school support remedies poor learning quality by delivering child-centred, curriculum-aligned activities that give children the foundation to complete the rest of their education. Based on data collected between 2010 and 2018 that show improvements in learning outcomes in Hindi, English, and Mathematics, EG’s classroom approach has improved the quality of education for children in intervention areas. High retention rates and qualitative evidence also suggest that the Educate Girls pedagogy promotes student engagement in the classroom.

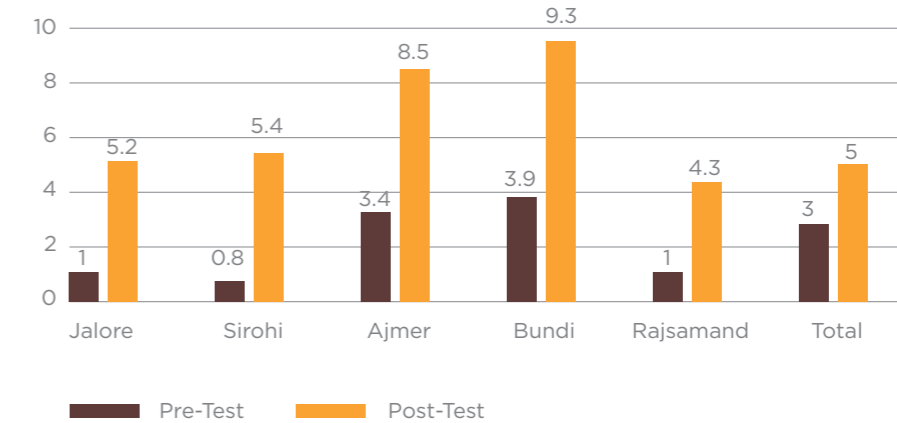
Educate Girls’ teaching and learning component is designed to help improve the quality of children’s learning in from third through fifth grade, as well as increase retention, by supplementing traditional teaching and engaging students actively in learning through child-centred pedagogy. It is delivered in classrooms by Team Balika and Field Coordinators. As of 2018, Educate Girls has reached over 450,000 children via this support.<sup>103</sup>

Evidence on the impact of the in-class support suggests that it helps improve student learning levels in Hindi, English, and Maths. EG’s 2010 proof of concept study in Pali did not include a control group, but found that in comparing pre- and post-tests for 953 students in the 52 schools in which teachers were trained in creative teaching and learning techniques, 17% more students could read a paragraph in Hindi, 28% more could read a paragraph in English, and 31% more were able to do two-digit addition and subtraction after receiving the intervention.<sup>104</sup> In a randomised controlled trial from 2011 to 2013, Dellavallade, Griffith and Thornton found no significant

impacts of the in-class support on learning in the first year, but found substantial learning gains with treatment effects of 0.25 in Hindi, 0.20 in English, and 0.32 in maths on a five-point test scale in the second year.<sup>105</sup>

The data from 2016 to 2018 pre- and post-test reported by Educate Girls also point to improvements in learning due to this child-centred approach. Pre-test results show that only 38% of students could read a simple story in Hindi. After six months of handholding through Team Balika and staff, this percentage increased to 48% an improvement of 10%.<sup>106</sup> Though English learning levels are generally low in districts where Educate Girls works, results suggest that EG’s in-class support has led to increases of 2% in the number of children who can read a story and 5% in children who can read up to sentence level from pre-test to post-test.<sup>107</sup> Similarly, in Mathematics, the number of students who can do simple multiplication and division increased by 8%, from 6% in pre-tests to 14% in post-tests.<sup>108</sup> Figures 5 and 6<sup>109</sup> capture the district-wise percentage increases of children performing at story level

Figure 5. Percent of children able to read a story in English in pre- vs. post-tests

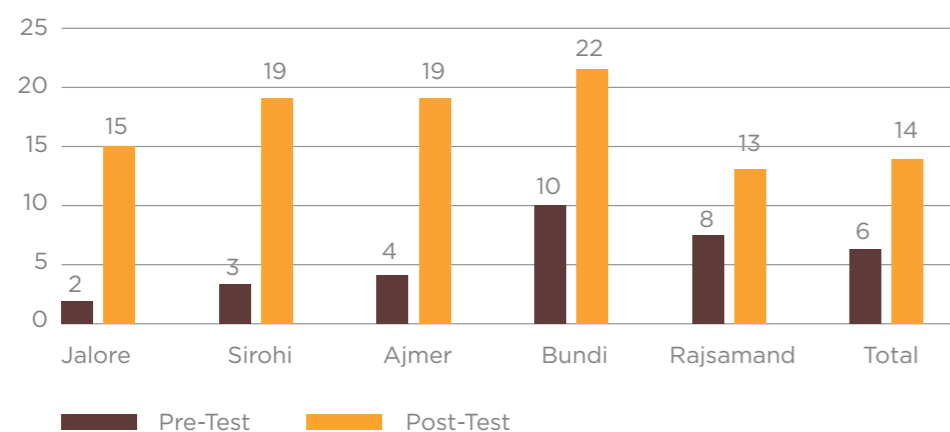


<sup>101</sup> Focus Group Discussion #4, School  
<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Assomull, Abdo, and Pelley, “Driving Grades, Driving Growth: How Private Capital in Education Is Increasing Access, Inspiring Innovation and Improving Outcomes,” 2015.  
<sup>104</sup> Educate Girls, “Educate Girls Project Completion Report,” 2010, 24.

<sup>105</sup> Dellavallade, Griffith, and Thornton, 2017, 9 - 11.  
<sup>106</sup> Educate Girls, “EAC Technical Report July 2018.”  
<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 34.  
<sup>108</sup> Educate Girls, “Creative Learning and Teaching Impact Report: 2014 -2015,” 36.  
<sup>109</sup> Figure 5 and 6 data is sourced from Educate Girls’ Technical Report July 2018

Figure 6. Per cent of children able to do simple multiplication and division in pre- vs. post-tests.



in English and at simple multiplication and division level in Mathematics. Finally, while not within EAC-supported districts, results from EG's development impact bond in Bhilwara indicate that students in treatment schools had a 30% greater increase in scores on ASER<sup>110</sup> assessments than students in control schools, reinforcing evidence from EAC-supported districts that suggests EG's model helps improve learning outcomes.<sup>111</sup>

Qualitative evidence also points to Educate Girls classroom intervention as an important factor in improvements in learning. In Rajsamand and Sirohi, SMC members, teachers, and government officials report visible improvements in children's engagement and learning.<sup>112</sup> A teacher in Rajsamand shared that, "Creative learning and teaching is a change from the routine curriculum, but it helps reinforce the learning in the curriculum and engage children more deeply in it. I can see that their basic knowledge of Hindi,

English, and maths has improved."<sup>113</sup> A government official in Sirohi posited that Educate Girls' work in the classroom is effective because it increases children's sense of confidence in their learning.<sup>114</sup> Taken together, quantitative and qualitative evidence suggest that Educate Girls' child-centric pedagogy positively affects the quality of students' learning.

Evidence also suggests that Educate Girls' child-centric approach effects on student engagement positively affect retention rates. Given the integrated nature of Educate Girls' model, it is impossible to attribute positive retention results fully to the in-class support and not to other components of the model. However, because it uses child-centred pedagogy and focuses on making learning more fun, it is likely that it contributes substantially to children's engagement in and enjoyment of their classroom experience, and thus their desire to continue their education. Dellavallade, Griffith, and Thornton found that

the learning programme had significant effects on retention after one year, with treatment students 4.2% more likely to be retained and a 3.6% increase in boys' retention rates in particular.<sup>115</sup> In addition, EG's self-reported monitoring and evaluation data for EAC-supported districts cites a very high retention rate of 91.3% (84,175 children retained against initial enrolment of 89,225) for the first four cohorts that the organisation enrolled between 2013 and 2017.<sup>116</sup> Qualitative evidence supports the notion that it has positively impacted retention; community members observed that children are excited to come to school because learning with Educate Girls' support is interactive and fun<sup>117</sup> and that students appear more engaged in their education.<sup>118</sup>

While Educate Girls' approach positively contributes to learning and retention, questions remain about the most effective and sustainable way to implement it. Originally, Educate Girls worked in partnership with the Government to train teachers, in addition to training their own staff and volunteers, to implement. Training for teachers was provided by master trainers from the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) in each district, along with EG. However, starting in 2014, due to reduction in government training budgets and lack of availability of government trainers, Educate Girls was no longer able to train teachers.<sup>119</sup> It is unclear whether relying on teachers to deliver the additional curriculum is more or less effective than delivery by EG's own volunteers and staff in terms of learning quality; many teachers are already overburdened with their classroom responsibilities and may be less able to absorb and use the techniques than EG volunteers and staff. However, it is possible that training

teachers could foster greater sustainability by transferring child-centred pedagogical techniques to those who are likely to be in classrooms over the long-term. And while additional experimentation and research could help compare the merits of training teachers versus staff and volunteers, without the political will and budgetary support from the government to train teachers, EG is unlikely to be able to test these two delivery modes and will instead continue to rely on volunteers and staff to implement their approach.

### Discussion of results

Educate Girls' achievements, including enrolling over 100,000 children, retaining 91.3% of them, improving their learning quality, improving infrastructure through SMCs, and creating a greater sense of community responsibility for education, have contributed substantively to regional, national, and global goals for better and more equitable education.

#### State level.

At the state level, Rajasthan is making changes towards greater accountability for quality learning via the Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation (CCE) scheme,<sup>120</sup> which replaces year-end examinations with ongoing assessments for students in grades 1 to 8. EG's model of holding communities accountable for girls' enrolment, retention and learning reinforces the state's approach to formative, in addition to summative, accountability.

#### National level.

Nationally, India's Right to Education Act (RTE) places the burden of providing a free and compulsory education for children ages 6 to 14 on the government. Under RTE, educating girls is not only the right thing do

110 "ASER" stands for the Annual Status of Education Report, which is an annual citizen-led survey on children's schooling status and basic learning levels for states and rural districts in India.

111 McManus and Sturla, "Learning and Enrollment Gains of the World's First Development Impact Bond."

112 Interviews #8, 11, 16, and Focus Group Discussions #1, 4, 5, and 9.

113 Interview #8 with primary school teacher.

114 Interview #19 with Sirohi Government Resource Person

115 Dellavallade, Griffith, and Thornton, "Creative Learning and Teaching - External Interim Technical Report: Jalore Randomised Control Trial Schools," 2017.

116 Educate Girls, "EAC Technical Report July 2018."

117 Focus Group Discussion #4. School Management Committee members, Godva, Khamnor, Rajsamand, Rajasthan, July 27, 2017.

118 Ibid.

119 Educate Girls Technical Report to Educate A Child, July 2016.

120 Windlass, "Michael & Susan Dell Foundation," 2014.



but it is required by law. Through close partnership with the government and joint ownership of success, Educate Girls' positive results have contributed to the government's delivery of RTE in rural Rajasthan by helping to ensure that 100,000 children are in school and learning. Educate Girls' success in enrolling girls at the primary level and in instilling the importance of girls' education in communities has also helped the government deliver on the National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)<sup>121</sup> by enrolling girls at the primary level, and on the Kasturba Gandhi Balika

Vidyala (KGBV)<sup>122</sup> scheme by helping communities enrol girls in residential upper primary and secondary schools. EG's work to raise awareness of the importance of girls' education also aligns closely with Prime Minister Modi's national 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' (Save a girl, educate a girl) scheme to raise awareness and change mind-sets about girls' and women's empowerment.<sup>123</sup>

*International level.*

Internationally, EG's positive results also contribute to Sustainable Development

Goal (SDG) 4,<sup>124</sup> which moves beyond Millennium Development Goal #2 on ensuring that children are in school to focus on inclusion in educational opportunities and improving the quality of learning. EG's work to bring out of school children into the formal education system and to improve the quality of the education they receive aligns and contribute to the inclusion, equity and quality aims of SDG 4.

*Strengthening existing systems.*

Rather than creating a separate programme or working with private schools, Educate Girls recognises that in India, the government is ultimately the primary duty bearer of the right to education, as reflected in RTE.<sup>125</sup> It works with communities, government, and other stakeholders to enrol girls in government schools and to strengthen the quality of education within these schools. As the World Bank's 2018 World Development Report on Learning acknowledges, the alternative of working through private or parallel systems may have short-term benefits, such as bypassing the vagaries of politics and policy changes, but in the long term, such a choice "can undermine the political constituency for effective public schooling."<sup>126</sup> Not only has Educate Girls achieved impressive enrolment, retention, and learning quality outcomes, but these outcomes also contribute to increased gender equity and improved learning quality within the existing government education system. This approach is cost-effective in that it activates communities to unlock existing resources for education, enrolling girls in existing schools and working with School Management Committees to submit SIPs and release funds that the government has already set aside for school improvement. It also promotes sustainability by deeply engaging local stakeholders, thus ensuring local ownership over educational progress. In this way, Educate Girls' efforts in service of girls and

learning strengthen the equity and quality of education in government schools.<sup>127</sup>

*Scale and sustainability of impact.*

Educate Girls' comprehensive model and clustering and saturation approach to expansion to deeply engage communities, has helped the organisation achieve scale not only in the number of girls it has reached, but also in maintaining the quality of its results and the depth of its impact on communities. As Brookings Institution's 2016 Millions Learning report on scaling in education recognises, "the act of 'scaling' is about expanding coverage while simultaneously ensuring the depth of change necessary to support and sustain a lasting educational improvement."<sup>128</sup> Educate Girls has recognised that it is not only the number of girls enrolled that matters, but retention, the quality of learning, and the extent to which the community is supportive of girls' education as well.

According to Coburn (2003), innovations that achieve permanence are often marked by "a broader or deeper spread of new norms or beliefs," which is apparent in Educate Girls' efforts to change community mind-sets about education.<sup>129</sup> Whether changes in mind-set and behaviour will last without ongoing intervention from EG is uncertain. However, early signs suggest that these changes may endure. In Sirohi, Team Balika have sometimes been unable to visit communities for several months at a time, but parents still send their girls to school.<sup>130</sup> "EG's success is sustainable in the long run," a Team Balika volunteer said, "because the generation that is being educated now will in turn educate their own girls."<sup>131</sup> Government officials in Rajsamand expressed confidence in the change that EG has created and hope that communities will continue to enrol girls and send them to school after Grade 8.<sup>132</sup>

## What makes Educate Girls Model different?



Door-to-door to find every out of school girl



Local solution, local problem-village based gender champions



Sensitize the community to change behavior



Community informed, involved and active



Provide in-school and out of school support

<sup>121</sup> NPEGEL was formulated for the education of underprivileged and disadvantaged girls from Grades 1 to 8 as a distinct gender component plan of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All Movement), an Indian Government program to universalise elementary education. NPEGEL focuses on achieving enrolment for girls in educationally backward areas.

<sup>122</sup> KGBV is a scheme set up by the government to provide educational facilities for girls belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, minority communities and families below the poverty line in Educationally Backward Blocks.

<sup>123</sup> For more information on the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme, see the Prime Minister's website or the scheme's main webpage.

<sup>124</sup> SDG 4 reads, "Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning."

<sup>125</sup> UNESCO, "Accountability in education 2017/8," xiii.

<sup>126</sup> World Bank, World Development Report 2018, 177.

<sup>127</sup> World Bank, World Development Report 2018, 16 and 24.

<sup>128</sup> Robinson and Winthrop, Millions Learning, 2016, 35.

<sup>129</sup> Coburn, 2003.

<sup>130</sup> Focus Group Discussion #8, Team Balika volunteers, Sirohi.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Interview #9, Government District Elementary Education Officer, Rajsamand.

## VI. DISCUSSION



This section presents findings in relation to the second objective of the case study to document lessons learned, decisions, strategies, processes, institutional mandates, and actors that have contributed to Educate Girls' success. It includes findings on the organisation's vision and mission, structure, strategic decisions and approaches, processes, institutional mandates and actors. Along with the subsequent section on EAC's role, value-added and challenges, this section also addresses the case study's third objective to assess human, institutional, technical, and financial resources that have contributed to the programme's success.

### Factors that have contributed substantively to the success of Educate Girls Model

A clear and simple vision and mission have created alignment among Educate Girls leadership, staff, volunteers, and partners, and have helped EG define its scope and goals. Educate Girls' vision and mission is easy for staff members, volunteers, and partners alike to understand. As EG's founder, Safeena Husain, explains, "if you close your eyes, and you see a girl doing household chores or herding cattle in a village, that is the problem that we are trying to solve. I know I've reached success when I can see her in a uniform, sitting in a classroom and learning." EG staff members and volunteers, from senior leaders to Team Balika, were able to articulate EG's vision, mission, and model in their own words.<sup>133</sup> The clarity and simplicity of the vision and mission (see Box 1) have enabled Educate Girls to align quickly with staff, volunteers, and external partners, develop a clear and

streamlined monitoring and evaluation system to measure success, and stay accountable to the communities in which the organisation works.

Based on the experience of senior leaders, the organisation has at times been requested by funding and government partners to expand in scope to address issues including school sanitation, handwashing and hygiene, and eye care.<sup>134</sup> However, a clearly defined vision and mission have helped EG leadership draw the line on what the organisation can and cannot do in response to partners' ideas. Adhering to its mission can come with costs; including time spent managing partner expectations, and occasionally the loss of partners when they insist that EG pursue activities outside of its mission.<sup>135</sup> As EG continues to navigate partnerships, clarity on mission and scope, priorities as expressed through its strategic plan, and partners who understand and fully support the organisation's vision, are critical assets to its success.

### Box 1. Vision and Mission

**Vision Statement:** We aim to achieve behavioural, social, and economic transformation for all girls towards an India where all children have equal opportunities to access quality education.

**Mission Statement:** We leverage existing community and government resources to ensure that all girls are in school and learning well.

<sup>133</sup> Senior leadership interviews # 1, 2, and 4; FGD #2, 3, 7, and 9.

<sup>134</sup> Senior Leader 6 & 7 interviews.  
<sup>135</sup> Ibid.



**A geographic clustering and saturation approach** has contributed to the success of Educate Girls' mind-set and behaviour change efforts. As Husain explains, "we wanted to create an echo chamber, with everyone from village headmen to government block officers spreading the same message." Based on early success, Educate Girls works in clusters of villages within a district (hotspots) where gender gaps are large. Clustering geographically and saturating communities with its message enables EG to achieve widespread awareness of the importance of girls' education within a given village, block or district. Clustering also achieves economies of scale by saving time and money on staff travel, and by allowing EG to work with one set of government officials in a block or district to build deeper relationships and

gain government support for change in a greater number of villages at once.<sup>136</sup>

**Sustainable volunteer and staff recruitment, training and retention systems** are an important enabling element of EG's programme. Educate Girls' "local agent, local message, local voice" approach helps volunteers build strong relationships with communities, a key prerequisite to behaviour change. However, the organisation has at times struggled with volunteer attrition rates. By experimenting with volunteer recruitment and compensation, EG discovered the importance of local agents as drivers of change in communities.<sup>137</sup> Team Balika volunteers and many of Educate Girls' staff members are recruited from the communities in which they work, meaning that they are



Improved Learning Outcomes

<sup>136</sup> Educate Girls Senior Leader 1 Interview, Mumbai, July 24, 2017.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

invested in finding solutions, and can build on a deep understanding of families' needs and challenges to develop trusting relationships with community stakeholders. Parents, teachers, and local leaders are more receptive to a message that comes from fellow community members. In addition, the constant physical presence of Team Balika in villages helps create accountability for progress.<sup>138</sup> "My village, my problem, my solution," is a common refrain among Team Balika and EG field staff.<sup>139</sup> Educate Girls summarises this approach as, "local agent, local message, local voice."

Recruiting locally has its advantages in terms of volunteer motivation and development of trusting relationships with communities, which translates into effective community engagement efforts, as is evident in high enrolment numbers and evidence on community mind-sets. However, EG still faces challenges related to Team Balika retention, which inhibits the success of its model. In 2012 and 2013, EG worked with consultants to review lessons from other volunteer-based organisations and to develop options for structuring recruitment, training, and ongoing support to Team Balika and has implemented many recommendations that came out of this process.<sup>140</sup> Over time, EG has extended and refined the initial training provided to Team Balika. While in 2014, TB's five-day training focused on community mobilisation and classroom support, by 2017-18, TB training lasted for 12 days and covered the identification of enrolment, attendance, infrastructure, and education quality issues, SMCs and SIPs, classroom management, the child-pedagogy, soft skills, and India's Right to

Education Act.<sup>141</sup> In addition, EG added block-level review meetings in which Team Balika gather to surface and solve problems from the field, and share good practices.<sup>142</sup> EG has also provided support for Team Balika personal and professional development, providing letters of recommendation, references, certificates, and letters of appreciation, and opportunities to strengthen English-speaking skills and receive career counselling.<sup>143</sup> EG is also in regular communication with Team Balika through monthly and annual meetings, phone and SMS, newsletters, and open houses. The organisation has also taken steps to identify potential replacement volunteers upfront during recruitment to mitigate disruptions to programming caused by volunteer departures.<sup>144</sup> While positive, these measures have not resulted in a reduced TB dropout rate, which averaged 10% from 2013 to 2015, and 12% in July 2017 and January 2018.<sup>145</sup> Recruiting committed, motivated volunteers and managing Team Balika retention will be crucial to the organisation's success as it expands to engage additional communities.

**Educate Girls' organisational structure, which mirrors that of government, supports strong partnerships with government stakeholders at all levels,** facilitating the delivery of the Right to Education Act and of EG's mission. Educate Girls made a strategic choice for its organisational structure to mirror that of the government, a decision that has smoothed the way to build strong relationships with the government at all levels. The government is not monolithic, but rather comprised of a multitude of actors, from teachers at the village level, to block officers and district

<sup>138</sup> Educate Girls Senior Leader 5 Interview, Rajsamand, Rajasthan, July 25, 2017.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Jain and Patni, "Conceptualization and Strategic Strengthening of Team Balika: An Innovative Model by Educate Girls," January 2013.

<sup>141</sup> Educate Girls Technical Report to Educate A Child, July 2016.

<sup>142</sup> Educate Girls Technical Report to Educate A Child, July 2015.

<sup>143</sup> Educate Girls Technical Report to Educate A Child, July 2016.

<sup>144</sup> Educate Girls Technical Reports to Educate A Child, 2013-2015.

<sup>145</sup> Educate Girls Technical Reports to Educate A Child, 2017-2018.

collectors, all the way up to the state and national levels.<sup>146</sup> As one senior leader explains, “early on as we scaled, we created our structure to resemble that of the government and to work across levels. The way we define a cluster, a block, or a district: all our units of replication and our staffing model is a deliberate mirror image of the government.”<sup>147</sup> Relationship building with government stakeholders is thus a responsibility across all levels of staff within the organisation, from Team Balika to regional managers. As a result, EG has strong government relationships, which helps both parties to deliver on the Right to Education Act’s promise of education for all, and enables EG to deliver on its mission of leveraging existing community and government resources to improve education for girls.

**Educate Girls successfully balances a codified model, which enables it to scale quickly, with staff freedom and decentralised ownership** that creates space for innovation and improvement of the programme. For example, over the course of its development, Educate Girls has formalised its child-centric pedagogy and structured an annual cycle of community engagement for enrolment and retention. In this cycle, community mobilisation and training occur in the late spring and early summer months, enrolment happens in July when schools open; life skills training, creative learning and teaching, and community engagement to improve school infrastructure take place through the fall and winter months. This cycle ensures that each of EG’s teams knows its role at any given time, which allows the organisation to implement efficiently. However, this structure is not stifling; rather, staff are empowered to innovate precisely

because the parameters of the model are well-defined and work in service of enrolment, retention, and learning goals. As a senior staff member expressed, “what we need to achieve remains unchanged but how we do it, can we do it faster, better, open to ideas and new inputs from newcomers.”<sup>148</sup> Another explains,

*“Solving problems is a ground [level] issue. For example, girls may not be going to school because parents feel it is unsafe. No intervention in our model prescribes how we should solve that problem: our volunteers and field staff will look for a local solution. Maybe they speak to a village leader to cut the bushes and create a more visible, safer path to school. Maybe they find a parent who can accompany the girls as they walk. Because the vision of success, of getting the girl to school and learning is clear, we can diagnose and solve the problem at the local level.”<sup>149</sup>*

**Streamlined and purposeful data collection and use** helps optimise Educate Girls’ activities and use of resources in response to community needs. EG values data for accountability and to drive decision-making across its model, as reflected in the 9% of its budget spent on monitoring and evaluation and an impact team that includes over 80 staff members across the organisation.<sup>150</sup>

The data that EG collects informs its resource allocation, targeting hotspots and tailoring engagement activities based on community needs. As one EG leader explains, EG staff have used data to track and weigh the effectiveness, costs, and amount of staff effort of different community mobilisation approaches, including neighbourhood meetings, door to door meetings, and a

screening of an awareness-raising film. They discovered that while film screenings were easier to organise and had greater turnout, they only resulted in increased awareness among community members, rather than greater enrolment of girls in school. As a result, the team decided to use neighbourhood meetings to maximise the number of enrolments in a village.<sup>151</sup>

To facilitate data-driven decision making and the sharing of knowledge across the organisation, Educate Girls uses a mobile application, with approximately 1100 to 1200 field coordinators entering data in real time. The application, developed with the in-kind support of Lionbridge Technologies<sup>152</sup> provides greater accessibility and visibility of data across levels within the organisation, and helps to integrate data from different districts together.<sup>153</sup> The data is also used to surface challenges and track the solutions that local teams are using to address them. While challenges are often specific to a certain village, block, or district, sometimes they are common across geographies; in that case, the mobile application helps surface and disseminate them across the organisation.<sup>154</sup>

Educate Girls also uses a lean data approach, tracking a minimum number of indicators. Over time, it has refined indicators down, cutting out input and process indicators, and cross-walking internal and external data needs to hone a focus on enrolment, retention, and learning outcomes and supporting outputs.<sup>155</sup>

For example, while EG used to track detailed data on the number and types of stakeholders that each Team Balika met with to enrol a child, it now tracks only the total number of visits that a Team Balika volunteer has made to community stakeholders, comparing this against enrolment outcomes.<sup>156</sup> This streamlining has helped ensure that the organisation is responsive to funding partner demands to measure impact, without having to collect data that it will not use internally.<sup>157</sup> Being intentional about the data it collects contributes to EG’s efficient use of financial and human resources devoted to monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, EG views the collection of only data that it will use as ethical practice, avoiding wasted effort and time costs of collecting data that will not be used.<sup>158</sup> Educate Girl’s approach to data will only improve as additional digitisation is rolled out.

**Without building partnerships** with the government as a key provider of education and enabler of scale, Educate Girls could not have achieved the success it has seen in enrolment, retention, and learning. The government’s expansive and essential role in providing education, and its assets of reach, resources, and expertise, are crucial inputs to Educate Girls’ success. As recognised in its mission to leverage existing community and government resources to ensure that all girls are in school and learning well, EG does not intend to replace or duplicate government functions; rather, its organisational set-up is designed to complement government efforts and work with it to deliver on RTE. As one stakeholder noted, “If you are working for girls’ education, partnering with the government is a must.”<sup>159</sup>

146 Ibid. Senior Leader 1 interview.

147 Senior Leader 1 interview.

148 Senior Leader 2 interview.

149 Senior Leader 1 interview.

150 Senior Leader 3 & 4 interviews.

151 Senior Leader 1 interview.

152 McManus and Sturla, ID Insight.

153 Senior Leader 4 interview.

154 Ibid.

155 Senior Leader 4 interview.

156 Ibid.

157 Ibid.

158 Focus Group Discussion #9, district team, Sirohi.

159 Interview #13, KGBV warden Rajsamand.

The Right to Education Act mandates that government, and not parents, to take responsibility for children's education. Instead of criticising the government for shortcomings in delivering on RTE, Educate Girls helps build on its efforts towards this mandate; indeed, "a key component of Educate Girls' theory of change is treating the government as part of the solution rather than the problem."<sup>160</sup> A KGBV warden in Rajsamand asserts that "EG and the government are making a joint effort."<sup>161</sup> The partnership and mutual accountability between EG and the government helps improve the quality of education and increase the number of children receiving an education.

To achieve its mission, Educate Girls activates the resources that the government has set aside for girls' education, and acts as their eyes and ears in remote districts. Even though the government created dedicated residential secondary schools for ST, SC, OBC and minority girls via the KGBV scheme, these schools were under-enrolled in Rajasthan. EG is working to ensure that these spots are filled and that communities utilise the scheme that the government has put in place to their full advantage.

In addition, in interactions with community members and donors, EG intentionally avoids claiming successes as its own, instead regularly recognising government support for and contributions to joint accomplishments. Crediting government officials for success increases their willingness to partner and support EG's efforts.<sup>162</sup> As one Rajsamand official notes, "I was alone in this mission, but then the EG district manager came to see me, and I had a new ally. I was confident I should support what they were doing."<sup>163</sup>

While close partnership with the government is in many ways a strength, it also means that Educate Girls is susceptible to the effects of changes in policies, schemes, and relationships across multiple levels of government. First, since the organisation operates with the support of local government, it faces obstacles when local officials are not willing to acknowledge challenges around girls' education. Under RTE, officials themselves are technically accountable for providing education for all girls, and thus acknowledging that girls are out of school can be sensitive and political. An EG senior leader recalled one District Collector's insistence that after EG helped close the district's enrolment gender gap, the quality of education did not need to be addressed.<sup>164</sup> This official did not see the need for EG to continue to intervene in the district, and without his support, it became difficult for EG to sign a Memorandum of Understanding and mobilise government resources and support.<sup>165</sup> This is one way in which the organisation's functioning is contingent on the vagaries of local government.

Second, changes in government policies and schemes can be deeply disruptive to EG's model. For example, the government made the decision to merge some primary and secondary schools in Rajasthan, reducing the overall number of schools by 1,200 across five districts in Rajasthan.<sup>166</sup> This has created challenges because EG does not have the correct permissions to work in combined schools. Additionally, school teachers and education officials are often reshuffled and transferred to other districts based on state government orders. This breaks the continuity of collaboration that EG has achieved by

building relationships over time with local stakeholders and government officials. Any additional changes to government policies, schemes, or relationships could deeply affect EG's ability to operate, but EG must live with this risk, as there is little that can mitigate it, aside from focusing on the strength of existing relationships with the government at all levels.

Recognising the limits of its own expertise, Educate Girls has used partnerships strategically to help fill gaps. Non-financial partners include the Women Changemaker Fellowship<sup>167</sup>, Swedish firm Mercuri Urval's assistance to address people and talent issues, Lionsbridge Technologies' assistance to create a mobile app for data collection and tracking, APCO Worldwide's government relations support, and more.<sup>168</sup> Additionally, Educate Girls has collaborated with organisations including UNICEF, Pratham, Sandhan, Sol's Ark and Dasra, leveraging their expertise and integrating their learnings into its programme.<sup>169</sup>

Given the importance of non-financial assistance in filling gaps, Educate Girls could also benefit from such partnerships going forward. Specifically, partnerships with technical experts to supplement in-house knowledge and skills, including research partners to leverage door-to-door survey data to its fullest extent and experts in human resource management could strengthen the programme's research and personnel growth in the future. In addition, while Educate Girls has been internationally recognised for its success by Skoll Foundation, WISE and the Qatar Foundation, the World Bank Development Marketplace, and other

prestigious institutions, giving it a stamp of credibility,<sup>170</sup> the organisation can do more in the future to strategically communicate its impact and disseminate its successful approaches. As one senior leader recognises, making the Educate Girls brand more visible can help with fundraising and technical support by attracting more like-minded partners, and can support the organisation's "business of mind-set change" in which "any and every advocate is important."<sup>171</sup> Additional non-financial needs will be clarified as Educate Girls designs and begins to implement the strategy for its next phase of growth.

**Catalytic and flexible anchor funding** has enabled Educate Girls to channel resources to meet community needs and support a growing cadre of staff and volunteers crucial to the scale-up of its achievements in improving enrolment, retention, and learning outcomes. Much like its use of data to inform decision-making, Educate Girls has taken a strategic and outcomes-focused approach to managing its finances and relationships with funding partners. Growing financial support, with a budget increasing from \$700,000 to \$8.5 million over the past 7 years, has enabled the organisation to expand.<sup>172</sup> EG invests substantially in field staff and volunteers, which means that around 70% of its current costs – salaries, training, travel, and materials – are devoted to supporting its people.<sup>173</sup> As a catalytic anchor-funding partner to Educate Girls, Educate A Child has provided substantial

160 Lee, "Managing the Educate Girls Brand: From Changing a Name to Creating a Movement."

161 Interview #13, KGBV warden Rajsamand.

162 Lee, "Managing the Educate Girls Brand: From Changing a Name to Creating a Movement."

163 Interview #9, District Elementary Education Official.

164 Senior Leader 7 interview.

165 Ibid.

166 Educate Girls, "EAC Technical Report January 2017."

167 Senior Leader 1 interview.

168 McManus and Sturla, "Learning and Enrollment Gains of the World's First Development Impact Bond."

169 Educate Girls, "The Credibility Factor."

170 Senior Leader 7 interview.

171 Senior Leader 7 interview.

172 Senior Leader 7 interview

173 Senior Leader 7 interview



financial support that is flexible, multi-year, and outcomes-focused to support the investments needed for the 1,500 salaried staff and over 11,000 volunteers who enable EG's current scale and rate of growth.

In addition to 50% of programme funding provided by EAC, other sources of unrestricted funding<sup>174</sup> have historically comprised 20% to 25% of EG's budget.<sup>175</sup> EG's budgeting process also links finances to activities and outcomes, reflecting accountability for results and allowing it to track how resources are deployed in relation to outcomes.<sup>176</sup> Experience with unrestricted funding and having in place outcomes-based budgeting has aided the process of setting up a Development Impact Bond<sup>177</sup>, a results-based financing instrument that gives EG the freedom to adapt and tailor its approach to achieve outcomes in Bhilwara district, and ensures that funders only pay for the results achieved.<sup>178</sup>

EG's historically high percentage of unrestricted funding and the flexible, multi-year funding provided by Educate A Child has enabled it to innovate, focus on scale and impact, and cover key investments like strong leadership. Unfortunately, as EG's budget has grown, the percentage of fully unrestricted funding has not followed, giving EG less room to innovate.

EG must constantly work hard to maintain and expand the base of its funders who value the outcomes-driven approach that the organisation has embraced and create the space for EG to tailor its solutions and programming to context. Substantial financial support from anchor funders will be critical for the organisation to recruit for the staff and volunteer needs identified above as necessary for growth.

## VII. EAC ROLE, VALUE ADDED, AND CHALLENGES RELATED TO SCALING UP EDUCATE GIRLS' PROGRAMME FOR OUT OF SCHOOL GIRLS



174 Unrestricted funding refers to funds that are not tied to specific geographic areas or activities.

175 Senior Leader 1 interview.

176 Senior Leader 4 interview.

177 The Development Impact Bond is the first of its kind in education, in partnership with UBS Optimus Foundation and Children's Investment Fund Foundation. It allows Educate Girls to innovate, adapt, and tailor its program to achieve the best possible results and ensures that funders only pay for the results achieved.

178 Educate Girls, "The Credibility Factor."

Educate A Child has invested \$4.25 million in Educate Girls from December 2012 to December 2017, covering approximately half of the programme's costs of \$8.5 million over this time, a substantial commitment in both amount and duration. Says one senior leader, "no one else has supported us in a way that is so long-term and outcomes-focused."<sup>179</sup>

EAC requires one-to-one match funding, prompting EG to seek co-funding to obtain its support. While matching requirements have helped unlock new sources of funding and grow the support available to EG, meeting them has at times been challenging for EG. While the organisation's vision is straightforward, its programme model is complex and takes time to explain to potential partners; match funding requirements push EG's fundraising efforts to nonetheless move at a quickened pace.

EAC's annual release of funding to EG is also contingent on the organisation's achievement of self-designed outcome milestones on enrolment, retention, and learning. This stands in contrast to other funders, which sometimes require specific outputs, such as hosting a certain number of School Management Committee meetings, which may or may not contribute to reaching outcomes of greatest concern to Educate Girls. Holding EG responsible for self-designed milestones provides the organisation with greater freedom to allocate resources based on communities' needs. A senior EG leader notes, "EAC funding does not hold us to a certain number of meetings, but instead to the number of children brought back to school. That flexibility is critical, because if we

discover a hotspot, we can respond to it with more meetings and community mobilisation activities. Most grant funding is stuck saying that we must have four village meetings a year, for example, which limits our ability to respond to challenges."<sup>180</sup> While donor output requirements are often well-intended and meant to create accountability, they can often inadvertently circumscribe organisations' space to find efficient and effective solutions most appropriate for the local context. A basis of trust underpins EAC's flexible funding, allowing EG to respond to needs on the ground, rather than to requirements that may not advance impact. Educate Girls views EAC's flexible and outcomes-focused support as invaluable.

Educate A Child's partnership and financial support has enabled EG to scale its operations from one district (Pali) to six in total (Jalore, Sirohi, Ajmer, Rajsamand, and Bundi, in addition to Pali). More specifically, EAC's funding supports investments in central organisational resources that are critical for scale, such as a performance management system, senior leadership talent and a growing staff and volunteer base, and enables Educate Girls to experiment. Without such funding, as one senior leader notes, "our ability to innovate and support our central office costs would be significantly inhibited."<sup>181</sup> Though many funders cannot support non-profit overhead costs, which are not easily tied to impact, for last-mile service delivery organisations like Educate Girls, which spends 70% of its budget on personnel, it is exactly this funding for core organisational costs that has helped enable growth and impact at scale. Indeed, the Millions Learning report finds that

"particularly with interventions originated by non-state actors, donors can play a critical role in providing flexible support that helps to build core operational capacity needed to scale effective ideas and approaches."<sup>182</sup>

The long-term nature and size of EAC's financial contribution to Educate Girls has also signalled to other funders that EG is a good investment, catalysing additional financial

support for the organisation. EG staff note that "having funding from EAC made it more likely that other funders would come on board."<sup>183</sup> Senior leaders at Educate Girls also point out that the multi-year nature and magnitude of EAC's financial commitment has held the organisation accountable to a longer-term vision of success, which has helped push EG towards scale and sustainability.

179 Senior Leader 7 interview.

180 Senior Leader 1 interview.

181 Senior Leader 7 interview.

182 Robinson and Winthrop, Millions Learning, 2016, 108.

183 Ibid.

## VIII. CONCLUSION



This section concludes the case study by summarising key findings in relation to the study's three objectives.

**Objective 1. How does the Educate Girls programme overcome key structural, cultural, and socio-economic barriers to girls' education? What factors have stimulated or inhibited these efforts?**

In rural Rajasthan, there are numerous, interacting barriers to girls' education, including societal and cultural gender biases against girls, early marriage, poverty and low socioeconomic status, marginalisation of Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, and Other Backwards Classes, long distances and unsafe journeys to school, a lack of girl-friendly school infrastructure, late entry into the education system, teacher shortages, poor learning quality, and inaccurate government data on the magnitude and nature of the problem. To address these challenges, Educate Girls has devised a multi-component intervention, which includes a door-to-door survey to understand girls' education challenges, community mobilisation, classroom support for child-centred teaching and learning techniques, the activation of school management committees, and development of girls as leaders through Bal Sabhas and life skills training.

Based on an examination of quantitative and qualitative evidence on Educate Girls' intervention for primary education in five districts (Ajmer, Bundi, Jalore, Rajsamand, and Sirohi), this study finds that Educate Girls' intervention effectively overcomes many of these barriers to girls' education to enrol and retain girls in school and ensure that they are learning. EG's door-to-door survey overcomes the inaccuracies of government data and

serves as an important accountability tool. Its community mobilisation activities through Team Balika and village and neighbourhood education meetings effectively convince parents and community leaders of the importance of education. Through classroom support implemented by Team Balika and field coordinators, Educate Girls remedies teacher shortages and poor learning quality through child-centred, curriculum-aligned activities. Evidence suggests that CLT has improved the quality of learning for children in intervention areas, and high retention rates and qualitative evidence of increased student engagement suggest that it has made education more effective, interactive, and fun for children. Finally, Educate Girls' support to School Management Committees has helped address a lack of girl-friendly infrastructure and safety and distance issues through the preparation, submission and completion of School Improvement Plans, have created improvements in school infrastructure such as installing electricity and running water, building boundary walls, and even securing additional teachers for understaffed schools.

**Objective 2. What lessons learned, strategies, processes, institutional mandates and actors have contributed substantively to the development, implementation, and success of Educate Girls?**

A number of underlying factors have stimulated the success of Educate Girls' model in achieving impact across enrolment, retention, and learning outcomes. First, the organisation's clear and simple vision and mission help leadership, staff, volunteers, partners, and communities align quickly. Additionally, EG's geographic clustering and saturation approach smooths its mind-set and behaviour change efforts by creating an



“echo chamber” for the importance of girls’ education. Furthermore, by using “local agent, local message, local voice” on the frontlines in communities, Educate Girls has been able to build strong, trusting relationships with communities, a key prerequisite to behaviour change.

Educate Girls’ organisational structure also mirrors that of government, a decision that has facilitated close partnership with government stakeholders at all levels. In addition, the organisation balances a structured model with freedom and space for innovation, ensuring clear expectations for staff along with constant improvement of the model. Finally, Educate Girls’ streamlined and purposeful collection and use of data helps optimise the organisation’s activities and use of resources in response to community needs.

**Objective 3. What type and size of human, institutional, technical, financial and other resources have made Educate Girls successful? What resources are needed to further develop and refine the programme?**

Human resources are at the centre of Educate Girls’ success. Its senior leadership has guided the organisation to an ambitious vision of impact and scale. EG’s culture brings staff and volunteers together and enlivens the organisation’s mission. While challenging to recruit and retain local, high-performing, and mission-aligned staff, Educate Girls has managed to do so at all levels, from volunteers to senior managers.

Substantial flexible and multi-year financial support from Educate A Child has enabled Educate Girls to successfully enrol over 100,000 children. This flexible funding has

supported a growing cadre of staff and volunteers, and has held EG accountable for success in enrolment, retention, and learning outcomes and to a long-term vision for girls’ education. In this way, EAC’s partnership has been a crucial contributor to Educate Girls’ outcomes at scale. In addition, technical and non-financial support, especially in the areas of human resources, digital technology, and government relations, have helped Educate Girls fill gaps and contributed to its success.

Without the institutional resource of government partnership, Educate Girls could not have achieved its current success in improving the situation of girls’ education in Rajasthan. Close partnership with the government, while essential to EG’s mission to build on and unlock existing resources for girls, also creates vulnerabilities to changes in government schemes and policies. However, this highlights the need for ongoing, continued engagement to build strong relationships with government officials at all levels.

Finally, Educate Girls is exploring promising future directions, including geographic expansion and intervention at the secondary school level. Regardless of the organisation’s exact pathway forward, significant expansion in its core staff and Team Balika, supported by flexible funding for personnel costs, will be essential for it to scale impact. EG can also benefit from greater visibility and from continued engagement to build internal capacity and fill remaining gaps in its increasingly robust in-house knowledge and skills.

## IX. ANNEXES



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11. Lower primary school teacher. Godva, Khamnor, Rajsamand, Rajasthan, 27 July 2017.
12. Team Balika volunteer. Delwara, Khamnor, Rajsamand, Rajasthan, 27 July 2017.
13. KGBV Warden. Nedach, Khamnor, Rajsamand, Rajasthan. 27 July 2017.

### Sirohi District

14. Educate Girls District Officer. Sirohi, Rajasthan, 28 July 2017.
15. Educate Girls Block Officer. Sirohi, Rajasthan, 28 July 2017.
16. Lower Primary School Headmaster. Sirohi, Rajasthan, 28 July 2017.
17. Upper Primary School Principal. Sirohi, Rajasthan, 28 July 2017.
18. Physical Teacher. Sirohi, Rajasthan, 28 July 2017.
19. Government Resource Person. Sirohi, Rajasthan, 28 July 2017.
20. Government Block Elementary Education Officer. Sirohi, Rajasthan, 28 July 2017.

## List of Focus Groups

### Rajsamand District

1. School Management Committee members. Focus Group Discussion. Rajsamand, Rajasthan, 26 July 2017.
2. Educate Girls District Impact Team. Focus Group Discussion. Rajsamand, Rajasthan, 26 July 2017.
3. Educate Girls Field Team. Focus Group Discussion. Rajsamand, Rajasthan, 26 July 2017.
4. School Management Committee members. Focus Group Discussion. Godva, Khamnor, Rajsamand, Rajasthan, 27 July 2017.
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6. Bal Sabha Girls. Focus Group Discussion. Nedach, Khamnor, Rajsamand, Rajasthan, 27 July 2017.

### Sirohi District

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8. Team Balika volunteers. Focus Group Discussion. Sirohi, Rajasthan, 29 July 2017.
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