



PROJECT FACT SHEET

SUMMARY

Based on the ongoing success of the *Udaan* (Flight) school in Uttar Pradesh (UP) and the more recently established one in Odisha, a new *Udaan* school has recently been launched in Mewat, Haryana. *Udaan* is an innovative model providing alternative schooling to girls aged 11 to 14 who have either never been to school, or who had have to drop out due to socio-economic reasons. Piloted in the district of Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh in 1999, the residential programme provides accelerated schooling that allows 100 girls every year to enter the formal system of education. Through an age-appropriate curriculum, these girls are fast tracked through the first five years of education in a span of eleven months. On graduation, they are eligible for a place in state schools. *Udaan* is unique both in terms of the teaching methods used, and also the relationships developed between the teachers and the students.

It not only provides graduates with educational opportunities, but also empowers them with a sense of confidence in their own abilities.



Udaan
Location: Haryana

AIMS

- To provide out of school girls with the opportunity to enter or return to mainstream education
- To facilitate girls' participation in decision-making processes by empowering them with knowledge, values, skills, and an awareness of their own rights and responsibilities

Udaan is a significant part of CARE's broader Girls' Education Programme (GEP) which views the education of marginalised and disadvantaged girls as a critical component in the fight against poverty and inequality. The GEP aims:

- To improve the quality and accessibility of elementary education in select educationally backward blocks in six states
- To strengthen educational opportunities for young children and illiterate women through integrated programmes of CARE
- To strengthen the ability of communities and parents to effectively participate in school affairs
- To create an enabling policy environment for effective school educational processes, to promote inclusive, equitable and quality education

STATISTICS

In the last 11 years of *Udaan* in UP:

- 98 percent of those enrolled stayed for the length of the course
- 95 percent passed the government's Class 5 examination
- 80 percent enrolled in Class 6 continued their education

It is hoped that such promising statistics will be replicated in the new Mewat *Udaan*.



SPECIFICS

In India, more than eight million children, 64 percent of whom are girls, are out of school¹. Girls are less likely to enrol in school and more likely than boys to drop out, particularly as grade levels increase. Nearly 30 percent of girls drop out before completing primary school and less than half move on to secondary school². In areas where certain castes and tribes are particularly marginalised and vulnerable, girls face even more barriers to securing an education.

In Mewat district, the literacy rate is only 44 percent of which the female literacy rate is just 24.26 percent.



CASE STUDY

Lakshmi is an outreach worker for the Mewat Udaan, and has had to overcome many challenges in trying to persuade parents to allow their daughters to attend the residential course. In her words, “Convincing the parents that girls are no less than boys, and their education is equally important... isn't easy, as girls in this village have never been sent to school. Another challenge is that Udaan is a residential school for girls between 11 and 14 years, and in these communities, girls of this age are not sent out the house – it is considered inappropriate and unsafe.”

Though her first efforts were met by unanimous refusal, Lakshmi persisted in promoting the programme and eventually managed to persuade many parents to send their daughters to attend the four-day orientation. They also attended a function at the school to understand its methods and at that time, Lakshmi was pleased to see that “most seem happy and are likely to let their girls stay on. Some elders who were invited said they were pleased that we are taking this step to liberate and empower these girls, and that it would ensure the development of the village”. Having met with such a good response in the early stages, albeit after extensive counselling and campaigning, the Mewat Udaan is set to be as successful as the other Udaan projects.

¹UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009, Education for All, Global Monitoring Report.

²Select Education Statistics, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, 2009.

The majority population that the Mewat *Udaan* targets is the marginalised Meo Muslim community and so the programme has had to adapt its approach to suit the particular needs of this community. For example, parents want their daughters to be taught Urdu and so the syllabus has been adapted accordingly.

Udaan utilises innovative teaching methods

- The *Udaan* teaching programme builds on the state curriculum to encourage free thinking and imagination, and it also includes a 'social learning' programme to prepare the students for life.
- An activity-based pedagogy is in place that encourages learning through the use of oral, material, creative, and critical experiences and methodologies.
- Alongside textbooks, the students use a vast range of materials such as literature, poetry, reference books, newspapers, and magazines. They also bring out a weekly newsletter and have learning 'corners' to encourage independent study.
- The students are split into four groups of about 25 members each to ensure that every girl can get the required attention from their teachers. This enables an ongoing process of evaluation so that the teachers can challenge or support those who need it.
- *Udaan* hosts a number of *milans* and community seminars to co-opt the parents in the education of their children.
- The students and their families, as well as the schools to which the girls are likely to be admitted, are prepared for 'life after *Udaan*'. Girls are encouraged to continue their studies and their future teachers are provided with reports on each student.

In 2005, CARE India received the **Commonwealth Best Practices Award** for *Udaan*.