



PROJECT FACT SHEET

SUMMARY

Udaan (Flight) is an innovative model providing alternative schooling to girls aged 11 to 14 who have either never been to school, or who had to drop out due to socio-economic reasons. Piloted in the district of Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh (UP) in 1999, the residential programme provides accelerated schooling, which 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: Uttar Pradesh

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 eleven years of *Udaan*:

- 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



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.

Addressing these issues, CARE's *Udaan* programme has seen 12 batches of approximately 100 girls each successfully graduate and move on to upper primary education and higher studies.

Due to the success of the project, *Udaan* has been replicated by CARE in other states:

- In Odisha, in one of its tribal dominated districts, Mayurbhanj, the *Udaan* school targets the most disadvantaged tribal girls residing in remote inaccessible habitations.



- An *Udaan* school was also launched in Bihar in the district of Madhubani. Mewat *Udaan*, Harayana, was established recently in a marginalised Muslim community and is already generating promising results.

INNOVATION IN TEACHING

- 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*.

CASE STUDY

Kavita comes from a very poor family in UP who could not afford to send any of the children to school. One day however, Kavita met a girl in her village who had been to CARE's Udaan residential camp. She was impressed by the confidence of the girl, even when questioned by the village elders. "I decided that day I will also go to Udaan. I came to Udaan when I was 11 years old and it changed my life completely," says Kavita.

She studied social issues such as health and politics, as well as being taken on 'field trips' to the bank and post office, and taught practical skills such as riding a bicycle. For the first time in her life, Kavita was encouraged to explore and share ideas, and to discuss, negotiate and work in groups with other girls from different castes and backgrounds. After 11 months of intensive academic, practical, and social learning, Kavita graduated from Udaan transformed.

She returned home to find that her parents had begun making plans for her to marry, but Kavita persuaded them to let her continue her studies. Recently again, her parents found another match for her. She was reluctant because the prospective groom was 30 years her senior. Having discussed her situation with her colleagues and other Udaan graduates, and with their support, she turned down the proposal.

Kavita is only 22 years old, but she has made it clear that she will not settle for second best. She is now a graduate and a trained teacher. She says proudly, "I now teach in a school and use Udaan-style participatory teaching methodology to teach other students. My class usually does better than other classes." She has now found her inner strength to make informed decisions about her life. She is not afraid to stand up for her dream of a career and a husband who respects her and her wishes.

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

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