



Udaan

An Accelerated Learning Programme for Out-of-School Girls



Reached over **2,50,000** adolescent girls since May 2000



3,383 girls enrolled in Udaan by 2019



Almost **95%** of the girls cleared grade five exams and **91%** continued schooling into subsequent grades



Overview

Even today, for over 17.8 million children out-of-school girls, primary education till grade five is a distant reality. Out of those who make past the primary grades, almost 40% drop out before enrolling into high school and college. In rural India, girls from marginalised communities face additional challenges due to the social stigma associated with educating girls.

Addressing this issue, CARE India developed a residential primary education initiative, called Udaan (flight), aiming to provide wings to adolescent girls so they can fly back into the fold of education. So far there have been 35 batches in over 4 states including 20 in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Each batch consisted of approximately 100 girls and they successfully graduated and continued with upper primary education and higher studies.

Udaan was designed to help girls in the age group of 10-14 years, belonging to vulnerable and economically and socially weaker communities in rural India. This special curriculum of accelerated learning enables girls to complete primary education (grade 1-5) in a period of 11

months and attain leadership and life skills. Once the girls complete the Udaan curriculum, they take government exams for grade five. On completing the UDAAN curriculum, the girls are mainstreamed into age appropriate grades in formal schools. Many UDAAN graduates have pursued higher education, a bunch working as teachers at schools and Anganwadi centres while a few opted in for engineering.

Udaan gives girls an opportunity to break the vicious cycle of illiteracy. The structure of the programme ensures that the quality of education remains a core component, supported by Information Technology to help design lesson plans and teaching methodology. The curriculum includes themes that promote the broader objectives of rights and equality, and provide the students an opportunity to develop a questioning mind. Through UDAAN, girls are empowered to challenge gender and social stereotypes that exist in the community.

Innovation

The innovation in Udaan lies in its methodology; the students complete formal primary school education while focussing on their overall development. A key aspect lies in the 'reading approach' used, which builds on each student's existing repertoire of knowledge. There extensive use of examples and anecdotes from the local context. Oral literature is used in a multilingual approach. The entire curriculum rests on the principle of equity and inclusion, which is contextualised to remove the marginalisation faced by girls.

Language acts as a social barrier for many of the students as they speak a different language and dialect from the mainstream language used for teaching. Language development is used as a tool to break such stereotypes and influence self-identity and confidence building process of the girls. Better expression, logical questioning and comprehension help the girls to negotiate their way through obstacles and address issues faced in their families, neighbourhood and the larger society.

Outcomes

- Udaan's curriculum was mainstreamed into various government projects and initiatives
- The framework developed on Age and Grade Appropriate Training has often been quoted by national and state governments as evident in the Right to Education Act '09
- Udaan is recognised as a model special training centre in Uttar Pradesh and Odisha
- The accelerated learning curriculum has been adopted by the Government of Uttar Pradesh and is being taught to children in government-run special training centres and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas

Achievements

- Recipient of the Commonwealth Learning Award in 2005
- Provided technical assistance to initiate Udaan in Nepal
- Recognised as one of the exemplary projects in the domain of residential schools in India

Shanti's transformation



Chirpy and confident Shanti from Udaan, is barely recognizable from her former self! Her teacher, Seema, remembers her to be a shy and silent girl initially, who was reluctant to participate in day to day school activities.

Shanti had her own share of hardships. She is the eldest of the five siblings, belongs to a minority community from Malwa, Hardoi. Being eldest, she had to bear the responsibilities of performing household chores, taking care of her younger siblings and look after two cows. Her parents are illiterate. Her father engages in low paying jobs and mother works as a farm laborer during cropping season. It was difficult to meet the needs of the family.

Initially, she was sent to nearby primary school though she was sent to nearby primary school but was not able to regularly attend. Parents did not take keen interest in her education and after few years she had to drop out of school to look after her siblings.

One of the Udaan representative met her father after learning that his eldest daughter does not go to school. By that time, no school was interested in giving her admission as she had forgotten a lot of what she had learnt during her brief stint in school. The Udaan representative was able to convince her father for enrolling Shanti in the Udaan programme - which focuses on drop out or never enrolled adolescent girls.

Going back to school after a long gap of 5-6 years was not easy for Shanti. To make her situation worse, she also had the habit of stealing and lying.

One day she was caught red handed. Her teachers however dealt with the matter with great sensitivity and empathy. They talked with her on the matter and helped her come out of this almost compulsive habit. Gradually, one could notice the positive changes in her personality. She became more expressive and her academic performance began to improve.

She has adjusted herself to the Udaan way of life and began to enjoy it. Udaan has been a beckon of hope for girls like Shaanti. She now aspires to become a teacher and help others.




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