

# «Girls Education Camp» - Schools for Girls in India

Schools for girls in Uttar Pradesh, the poorest state of India: Founded in 2001 by UNICEF, «Girls Education Camp» is a successful program that enables girls from the lowest social class to catch up on primary education within one year.

UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, safe water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.

The Swiss Committee for UNICEF, based in Zurich, was founded in 1959. The Committee supports UNICEF projects in various countries, informs about issues and UNICEF programs on a regular basis and supports the implementation of the convention on the rights of the child.



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Fifty-four percent of the worldwide 100 million illiterate children are girls. The reason for why girls do not attend school is either because their parents lack the resources to give their daughters an education or because their parents do not consider an education for girls as important.

When funds are limited, parents are more likely to send their sons to school than their daughters, even though experience shows that educated girls get married later and have fewer children. They are also much more likely to know their rights and be able to safeguard themselves from discrimination, violence and risks such as HIV/AIDS. As parents, they are also much more likely to send their children to school.

## Girls – a Priority for UNICEF

Experience shows that if a developing country succeeds in lowering the illiteracy rate among women, the infant mortality rate and birth rate decline and per capita income increases. This is why girls' education is one of UNICEF's five priorities. One of the eight Millennium Development Goals is to achieve primary education for all girls and boys by 2015.

## Schools for Girls: A Showcase Project

The «Girls Education Camp» in Barabanki, a district in Uttar Pradesh, is one of many educational UNICEF initiatives to achieve better school enrolment for girls. During an intensive course, girls without a formal education between 10 and 14 years old can make up the missed curriculum within one year. Subse-

quently, they can join the public school's sixth grade. Besides the traditional subjects, girls are instructed in practical subjects such as hygiene, healthful nutrition, precautionary measures in health and family planning.

## **450,000 Students in 9,600 Schools**

The «Girls Education Camp» was initiated within a broader educational campaign in Barabanki. One third of the 180 million residents of Uttar Pradesh live below the poverty line. Half of all children are malnourished. Only 27 percent of girls and 50 percent of boys complete fifth grade. By financially supporting schools and alternative educational centers in remote areas, UNICEF Switzerland enables these children to attend school. Emphasis is placed on girls from the lowest social classes. So far, 450,000 students attend class in 9,600 schools. UNICEF supports the launching of new schools, training of teachers, supplying schools with teaching and learning materials, as well as mobilizing and educating the public. Raising the public's awareness is an essential factor when convincing parents of the importance of education for their daughters. The government assumes responsibility of every school three years after it has been initiated. Aware that it cannot increase educational achievements, especially among girls, by itself, the government partners with foreign organizations and local nonprofits to achieve this goal.

## **Encouraging Results**

Because of the overwhelming success of the «Girls Education Camp», the head of the department for education announced that 250 additional schools will be established based on the UNIEF model. Both projects – alternative learning centers and «Girls Education Camp» - were presented as groundbreaking educational initiatives during the global conference on educational strategies in Dehli.

## **85 Euros for One Year of School**

It takes 65,000 euros to finance a new school for girls. A little goes a long way: 2 euros provide a girl with a book bag, notebooks, pencils and a pencil sharpener. 8 euros pay for a book bag, shoes, school uniform, as well as six notebooks, pencils, pencil sharpener, eraser, coloring book and crayons. 50 euros are needed to provide a whole class with math and language textbooks. 85 euros suffice to finance schooling for three girls during one year, including learning materials, meals and medical care. With 350 euros, a classroom can be furnished with two black boards, seating mats for the girls, a bookshelf and bulletin board.

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To learn more about the Swiss Committee for UNICEF, please visit [www.unicef.ch](http://www.unicef.ch).

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