

Report of the Evaluation of the Girls education programme of IIMPACT

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Description of the project being evaluated

The **Philanthropic Initiatives** partnership programme with IIMPACT, titled, “Girl Child Education Project” is implemented through Learning Centers and seeks to provide access to good quality education to girls in the age group of 6 to 14 years, from socially disadvantaged communities, located in remote rural areas. Most of the girls are first time learners in their rural communities. Each Learning Center (LC) educates 30 girls, for a period of 5 years after which the girls are mainstreamed into government schools.

Scope of the evaluation

Assessment and review of the **Philanthropic Initiatives** partnership programme with IIMPACT, titled, “Girl Child Education Project (Grant no: Philanthropic Initiatives /GO/ 1905/05978). through Learning Centers”

Presently IIMPACT is running 2,000 learning centres in 11 states and reaching out to 60,000 girls through its centres. However the scope of this evaluation was limited to look at the work being done with the grant support of the Philanthropic Initiatives from the start of the grant from 2012-13 to the present. In 2019-20, 50 learning centres are being supported under the project in (20)Pakur and (30)Paliganj districts of Jharkhand and Bihar.

Over a period of 8 years, the grant from Philanthropic Initiatives has been utilised to support around 2,400 girls in 80 learning centers in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh. The strength of the girls studying in these centres had increased from 313 in 2012 to 1,570 in 2020. From the learning centres supported by APPI, a total of 870 girls have

been mainstreamed so far into government schools. These girls have completed five years of primary schooling at the learning centres and have joined the government schools in class VI or higher.

The budget allocation to IIMPACT from the Philanthropic Initiatives has grown substantially during the timeline of the project. The 2012 sanction of INR 7.58 Lakhs for 10 Learning Centres which has increased to INR 62.26 Lakhs for the FY 2019-20 for running of 50 Learning Centres. From 2012-2021, the total grant size for IIMPACT was INR 4.18 Crores. (Consolidated budget sheets with income and expenditure of the grant received by IIMPACT from the **Philanthropic Initiatives** from 2012 to FY 2020-21 is compiled and attached with this report)

An evaluation of the grant support provided to IIMPACT by **Philanthropic Initiatives** is being conducted for the first time after completing 8 years of implementing the project. Efforts were made to cover the entire duration of the project, however, a more detailed and substantive assessment was drawn from the project period of the last 4 years from 2016-2020. Prior to 2016, the organizational memory of the projects handled was not systematized and the MIS and financial and accounting reporting were more rudimentary and not streamlined enough for ready reference and perusal. This was also the time when the organisation had a much smaller outreach and its programme was managed by Mrs Nirmala Tandon, a seasoned , passionate and highly committed educator. She is the driving force behind IIMPACT's outreach, growth and success. Her dedicated functioning as a nominee of the governing board of IIMPACT, working on a pro bono basis with a very small team to assist her at the head office, has worked wonders in the field. From the start there were partner NGOs selected by IIMPACT to run the learning centres in the community. It was after 2016-17 that IIMPACT had set up a robust and professional system of management, functioning, staffing and financial management and had undertaken a rapid expansion of the learning centres.

Since there was no baseline study and midterm review of the IIMPACT grant undertaken, it meant that the template used for evaluation by **Philanthropic Initiatives** could only be used as a broad reference guideline for the evaluation process. For drawing the insights and doing the analysis for the first 5 years of the grant, was primarily done based on the extensive interactions with the founding trustees of IIMPACT and review of the secondary documents such as the progress reports and annual financial contracts and expenditure statements covering the project period.

To review the girls' education programme from the grant support provided to IIMPACT by **Philanthropic Initiatives**, the OECD-DAC framework was used, looking at the **Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability (REEIS) criteria**.

The current situation due to prevailing COVID 19 pandemic in the country, had also impacted the scope and process of evaluation of the project. Restrictions on field visits made it

necessary to rely more on online platforms for interactions with the Board, field staff, girls, teachers, community and family members.

The objective of the Evaluation

- **Understand the gains made from the Project**
 - Achievements/results of the grant with respect to the grant promise (results framework) as agreed upon by the partner and **Philanthropic Initiatives**.
 - Understand the work done by the partner and the challenges faced in the implementation of the project.
 - Learning for Philanthropic Initiatives and the partner organization from key achievements and challenges faced so far.
- **Effectiveness of Intervention**
 - Understand the effectiveness of the key interventions of the project.
- **Way Forward**
 - Give key insights on the project and recommendations to facilitate the decision making process of **Philanthropic Initiatives** support to IIMPACT

Description of the methodology and processes of the evaluation

The evaluation exercise had drawn on the use of feminist approach of active listening, critical thinking, appreciative inquiry using qualitative methods to gather insights as to how had IIMPACT charted its organizational course in achieving its core agenda of girls education. As a methodological framework of inquiry, the lens of gender and intersectionality was also used to understand the processes of social change and girls empowerment via the educational route.

The following steps were followed for the evaluation:

- Desk Review of key reports including grant application, Results Framework, Budget, Partner Reports, interim reports as shared by **Philanthropic Initiatives** and IIMPACT with the Consultant.
- Planning the review and assessment process in consultation with **Philanthropic Initiatives** and IIMPACT team
- Developing the key questions used for the evaluation of the projects in the OECD-DAC framework. These questions will be probed using different methods.
- Visit to select few project areas of the partner organization
- Review of the progress of the project using Focussed Group Discussions and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders that included the management and pro-

gramme team of IIMPACT, some of the board members, the founding members and the ex ED of IIMPACT who was at the helm of the organisation for more than a decade between 2002-2018.

- Submission of the final report to **Philanthropic Initiatives** and IIMPACT providing key learnings, and suggesting course corrections in the project for the partner and **Philanthropic Initiatives**.

The structure of the report is as follows

1. Scope and objectives of the evaluation
2. Description of the methodology and processes of the evaluation
3. IIMPACT's Approach to Girls' Education
4. IIMPACT's organisational journey
5. Insights from the review of IIMPACT's girls education programme within the OECD framework
6. Dealing with the COVID challenge
7. A summary of the key strengths
8. Conclusion and Recommendations
9. Suggested Course of partnership of Philanthropic Initiatives with IIMPACT

IIMPACT's Approach to Girls' Education: A model of empowerment by education

IIMPACT's educational model is built with an exclusive focus of providing access to quality primary level (upto Class 5) education to out of school girls between the age of 6-14 years at their doorstep. It supports a 5 years of rigorous teaching - learning programme at a learning centre in the community that lays a strong foundation in building the scholastic competence of the girls. This model has been very successful in achieving its intended outcome of enabling the out of school girls to complete five years of primary level schooling. As a result a large number of girls have also been able to get back successfully in the mainstream educational system.

Quote from the interview with one of the founding members of IIMPACT:

"....when we began... The understanding was that if the girl child gets five years of good educational skills , then she can chart out into the world on a more equal footing platform. She can comprehend, and has got two linguistic skills. She will be better equipped to deal with issues facing her despite the barriers. Even if she doesn't go beyond studying class V, she has accumulated enough educational dividend to be treated with more dignity and possess greater self worth. The pride and admiration felt and expressed by the family and community towards achievement of the girls passing out of the learning

centres with class V skills is a quantum leap of change that the elders, fathers and mothers see being made by these girls in their lifetime.”

In its organisational time span of 18 years, IIMPACT's girls' education model has kept its singular focus on achieving high scholastic performance of the girls enrolled in the learning centres. Key elements of the educational model in the learning centres run by IIMPACT are-

- Selection of remote rural, tribal hamlets from educationally backward blocks and districts across the country for its work with the out of school girl children.
- Multi-age(6-14 years), multi-level, multi-grade (from class I to class V) teaching by a single teacher at the village/community based learning centre
- Rigorous and regular academic and pedagogic systems developed by IIMPACT for supporting primary level teaching - learning and scholastic competencies of the students and teachers- which includes detailed subject-wise curriculum development, Activity based methods, teaching learning materials, systems of continuous assessment of learning levels
- Setting high standards for good educational outcomes (aiming for 90% strike rate of girls scoring first division)
- Complement formal schooling with other educational activities such as mobile libraries, popularising science and math teaching- learning activities, sports and developing and using creative resources for teaching & learning materials;
- Strong capacity building of organisational systems for regular and systematic training of teachers for imparting quality education to the girls in the learning centres
- Building a critical mass of committed and trained teachers, supervisors and coordinators to deliver exceptional results
- Careful selection and training of the NGO partners by IIMPACT for greater outreach and implementation of the girls education program
- Building Strong reporting and review system
- Active and sensitive engagement with the community for a conducive and empowering ecosystem in facilitating girls education

IIMPACT's organisational journey: 2002-2020

For the first fifteen years between 2002-2016, IIMPACT had implemented the girls' education programme in partnership with the NGOs in different states with a tight-knit programme and management structure. The Founding members were deeply and personally involved in cre-

ating and fine-tuning IIMPACT model, all on a pro-bono basis. They ensured that they created an organization that achieved much even in remote, resource-starved areas for the girls in their care. They worked to create a scalable model that today functions, across 2,000 villages, with ease. An executive director nominated by the board members worked for over fourteen years in full time capacity, on a non remunerative basis. As mentioned above, her deep involvement has set the tone for IIMPACT's functioning and achievements. Neighbouring villages clamour to have IIMPACT Learning Centres in their vicinity. She was supported by one or two hired staff for handling the basic finance and administrative needs. The major supervision of administrative functions was supported very ably by the founding members of IIMPACT.

It was a phase wherein the organisational approach and intended results were largely driven on the steam of keen interest, commitment and personal investment of time and direction given by some of the active trustees of IIMPACT. The decisions related to outreach and coverage and number of learning centres was taken based on the quantum of resources raised, largely from individual donors and some institutional grants. IIMPACT's field surveys and locational preferences of Donors were analysed to direct operations and funding to the most backward areas.

The educational approach of running a learning centre with 30 girl children between the age group of 6-14 years with a multi grade, single teacher run on a fixed unit cost basis that was adopted in the initial years remained unchanged with slight tweaking done in the criteria of teacher selection and inputs for teacher training to meet the objective of equipping the students in the learning centres with literacy and numeracy skills up to class V.

From the start, the organisation had decided to spend the resources garnered only on the girls and their education. IIMPACT therefore operated with a skeletal and dedicated staff for programme management. The expansion plans of IIMPACT were made with a studied and conscious understanding of focussing on educational achievements (high scores in Class 5), building confidence levels and creating a happy, healthy atmosphere for the girls to excitedly come to The Learning Centre. IIMPACT's growth and comparatively vast scale is a result of Donors seeing value in the ground-level achievements and increasing their funding to reach out to more areas. In summary it could be said that from 2002-16, was the organisational phase of steady consolidation of its operating model of running the primary level education programme for out of school girls in a community based learning centre.

It was in the aforementioned context that the support provided by APPI began from 2011-12. By 2016, the organisation had grown its operations substantially. CSR was made mandatory from 2014. IIMPACT was now growing in far-flung States and Districts. This called for a major transitional shift from personalised, small team functioning on a limited scale (in terms of geographical areas, outreach, number of girls, number of learning centres) to scaling up

the programmatic outreach. On the ground expansion of the programme and its management necessitated the hiring of paid professionals at many levels.

IIMPACT's staff strength

Year	Staff strength
2012	6
2013	6
2014	6
2015	10
2015-16	10
FY-16-17	35
FY-17-18	35
FY-18-19	41
FY-19-20	41

The team to helm the programme management in IIMPACT was recruited after scouting the talent from the market. From 2016, the selection of the personnel was done with the criteria of having people at the helm who knew about the education sector and who could “walk the talk on education”.

The changes and expansion undertaken in the organisational functioning were done based on the confidence and success of delivering high quality results of running a successful educational model for over 12 years. By this time the hard work put in by the IIMPACT team and the partner NGOs had also shown heartening results in the spheres of community trust

and credibility. The parents, the village community and NGO partners were all coordinating in the interest of the girls.

As one of the founding members of the organisation beautifully put it : he had perceived the change that it was for him *“like a blind man who is able to see.”* He said the founding members of IIMPACT felt emboldened by the response from the girls and the community to continue scaling up and doing more of the same, providing five years of quality primary education to the out of school girls. As put by the founding member, *“we understood that going on this path is not rocket science,...People have been doing it and IIMPACT can also do it. This is what we have continued doing with minor innovations in evolving the pedagogy of teaching learning in every learning centre over the 18 years of organisational educational journey.”*

In the last three to four years from 2017 onwards, there was a conscious decision taken by the management and the trustees of the organisation for expanding its pace and scale of work, taking up innovations by seeking expertise of other nationally renowned educational organisations to add value to the teaching learning methods developed by IIMPACT and equip itself in its preparedness to respond to the changes in the social and policy context impacting the girls education.^[1] New partnership with educational institutions like, PRATHAM, Agasthya Foundation, APF and JodoGyan were made by IIMPACT. This has clearly given much needed freshness and impetus to develop their educational knowledge resources. In the financial year of 2016-17, IIMPACT had undertaken the process of re-vamping and upgrading of its systems for programme, knowledge, resource management and partnership development. Computerized MIS and communication systems were also set up for improved and systematised reporting, progress tracking and change. Documentation of organisational learning and insights gained from the work done in promoting girls education in the last 10-15 years was incorporated.

This was also the time where there was a shift from largely individual driven grant support to seeking support from the private, CSR and institutional grant making entities.(refer to the table below) The earlier 80-20 ratio of individual donors to CSR and institutional grants is now reversed. Earlier the reasoning of supporting the education of the girl child came largely as an “emotive response”, “I want to support a girl child or someone wanting to give funds in memory of their dear one.”

Donors support to IIMPACT

Year	Number of Donors (Institutional)	Number of Individual donors	Year	Number of Donors (Institutional)	Number of Individual donors
2008-09	25	55	2015-16	76	
2009-10	33	57	2016-17	58	
2010-11	46	157	2017-18	61	
2011-12	51	176	2018-19	62	
2012-13	52	135	2019-20	65	
2013-14	30	154			
2014-15	63	40			

The transition of IIMPACT towards becoming a fairly large NGO with bigger financial outlays (moving from a budget of 10 lakhs to 20 crores in a span of 17 years) and rapidly scaling learning centre outreach from 2 states to 11 states has been both impressive and dramatic. Presently the management team and the governing board of IIMPACT is invested in furthering the transition of the organization and working on its educational strategy development and road map for future, including developing of a resource plan for scaling up and replication of its education model to reach out to crores of girls who continue to be out of school.

Key organisational and programmatic features of IIMPACT

Culling from the rich set of discussions with all the concerned key stakeholders of IIMPACT, here's a snapshot of its key accomplishments:

- Exemplary credibility, reputation of integrity and respect of organisational work in the field leading to a huge demand for many more Learning Centres to be set up from the community, local NGOs and CBOs and donor community
- Dependability -- girls and community keep coming back for advice, support and encouragement
- Organisation built on tremendous commitment and passion of the trustees and management to sustain and spread the cause of girls education. The board members have played a stellar role in steering the leadership of the organisation and have provided high levels of personal support and guidance to the management by being actively involved in overseeing the functioning of the programme in detail .
- High levels of satisfaction on the return on investment expressed by the donors - leading to a progressively larger resource pool generated by IIMPACT besides a continued and long term support provided by a large community of individual and institutional donors
- Pedagogically a very sound teaching learning approach in place to give foundational literacy and elementary education skills to the students, accomplishing a very high rate of girls completing primary education and continuing to pursue education after the primary level
- Building a lean and sustainable unit cost basis financial expense model in the running of the learning centres, keeping strict financial discipline and Financial transparency
- Nurturing psycho- social needs of girls leading to major improvement in social indicators — greater respect for the girl children in the family and community and enhanced value for girls education, delayed age of marriage and delayed first pregnancy

Insights from the evaluation of IIMPACT's girls education programme within the OECD framework

Relevance of IIMPACT's education programme:

IIMPACT is probably the only NGO in India which has worked over 20 years with the single minded focus of educationally serving the out of school girl children and mainstreaming the girls into schooling system. There's a successful 'model' that has been honed systematically by the organisation and is ready to lend itself for future scale-up within IIMPACT and at other educational institutions at the local, state and national level. The dividend of the educational

model evolved by IIMPACT can be reaped to provide suitable models for reaching out to almost 3-5 crore girls who continue to be out of school nationwide.

IIMPACT's organisational strategy articulated as "Educate a girl and you educate generations to follow" to reach out to rural girl children from poor, socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds **has proved to be and continues to be relevant in providing quality and easy access to primary level education.**

Quotes from the FGDs with the teachers and NGO supervisors and interviews with the board members sums up the sentiments in this regard-

"The learning centre gives the girls a purpose, there is a sense of belonging for them, they feel cared for. The teachers are also given support by IIMPACT and NGO partners." "Girls learn to shed their inhibitions, hesitation and shyness and perform consistently well at all the 20 learning levels to get their class V completion certificate." " ... we have seen that over time the girls show independent thinking, self awareness, improved life skills."

Relevance and effectiveness of organisational approach to the Community:

Engagement with the community and keeping its ears close to the ground has been one of the most significant factors in building the organisational credibility and in ensuring the continuity of girls participation in the learning centre for five years. During the field visits made to two project areas, viz. Mewat in Haryana and Paliganj in Bihar and in the focused group discussions conducted for the purpose of the evaluation, enthusiastic support and keen participation of the mothers, members of the community, the panchayat members and school teachers was visibly evident. There was also a strong sense of trust and appreciation that the family members of the girls and the communities had for the teaching learning programme offered at the LC. In contrast, they expressed a big trust deficit towards the existing schooling system in providing quality education to the girl children in a safe and healthy environment.

As put by the ex E.D of IIMPACT, *"Once the girls start coming to the learning centre, it begins a chain reaction of hope and change as the family and community members begin to see the results of what the girls are able to accomplish...They see the girls reading the newspapers to their fathers. The family members have a tremendous sense of pride when they see the girls showing off the scholastic skills and fluency of reading and writing." "Girls go home and teach the mother how to write her name. The mothers feel very proud in seeing their daughters able to get the basic schooling which was denied to them."*

As one mother had put it in a FGD, " I was an illiterate person. If IIMPACT hadn't provided the facility of the learning centre for our girls in the community, my daughter, like me would have continued to be yoked in household drudgery, and spend her life in service of the family, collecting firewood and in fetching water. For going to the learning centre, my daughter

now takes bath and dresses up every day. Roz naha dho kar school jane lag gayi hai , aab usse saaf safai ke bare mein bhi pata hai. Pehle ladkiyon par ghar walon ki bahut roktok thi, aab kam aitraaj karate hai. Beti ko padte likhte deke kar uske abba ko bahut khushi hoti hai. Hamare samaj mein beta or beti ke beech barabari nahi samjte. Haan, aab ladki ko padne likhne se izzat milti hai.”

In the last two years, there has been an increasing appreciation by the leadership team of IIMPACT for investing in a more proactive engagement of the parents, and other important stakeholders in the village community including those associated with the government schooling system. More emphasis is being placed on increased ownership of the community and providing conditions to support the aspirations of the girls for an uninterrupted and optimal schooling and learning opportunities.

IIMPACT and its partner NGOs would need to develop behavior change communication based approaches to overcome the persistent systemic and structural challenges due to the patriarchal mindset prevailing in the communities. There may be the risk of having a backlash on the progress made to create a conducive community ecosystem.

The challenge is in building the conviction of the families and communities for them to grasp the relevance of education as a powerful tool in empowering and enabling the girls and for the girls to take the leap of faith and make appropriate and empowered decisions for themselves.

Relevance of Partnering with NGOs for implementation of IIMPACT’s educational programme: An important strategy of IIMPACT that ensures its relevance is to have partner organisations for implementing the girls education programme in the field. As one of the programme coordinators said, *“working with the partner organisation allows us to dedicate our role for bettering the quality of educational inputs, refine the pedagogy and develop knowledge and resources in enabling the girls in their learning and to see ourselves as education ambassadors. The partners undertake the operational , implementing and monitoring roles.”*

For IIMPACT and the NGO partners, efforts to continue the deepening of their relationship of trust would need to be a sustained effort. Building conviction in backward communities for a transformative agenda of girls’ empowerment faces many challenges. Some of these communities where IIMPACT has had till recently not much exposure with the mainstream society before IIMPACT.

Role of the NGO functionaries can be reassessed to see themselves more in the role as a social enabler and less in the monitoring and supervisory role while engaging with the families of the girls and on the community forums.

Relevance for the teachers in the learning centres: An opportunity for growth and empowerment

Stories of change and empowerment abound among the young women teachers most of whom also come from a deprived and difficult socio-economic context where they have faced gender barriers. In one of the FGDs, a story was shared by a NGO supervisor of a teacher travelling 50—60 kms from her village to come to a cyber shop during Covid to attend a web based learning programme organised by IIMPACT during the lockdown. When she was asked what was the motivation for her to take up such an arduous journey. She said, “ *Mujhe agar seekhne ka mauka milta hai, toh mein hamesha ready rehti hoon. Computer par digital world se seekhne ka mauka mila hai, mere liye yeh bahut badi baat hai.*” When asked about the importance of their work as teachers and what they have achieved, the teachers very evocatively narrated their journeys of struggle, joy and accomplishment in overcoming gender barriers of restricted mobility, constraints to fulfilling their aspiration of pursuing higher education, bearing unequal burden of care and household roles. Teachers felt that their coming from the same community as the girls made them role models and a positive influence on the girls and inspiring the families to send their girls to the Learning Centre. They said that their own education skills and teaching learning competencies had got substantively enhanced. The teachers shared they have been very ably supported in becoming competent teachers by systematic training inputs provided by IIMPACT and NGO partners. They have been equipped with improved language and other subject teaching skills; have learnt new and innovative ways of classroom teaching. The teachers on the whole seemed to enjoy their teaching role and learning new ways of teaching and learning. The sentiment that was echoed by most of the young teachers in the FGDs that, ‘*but for the efforts of the Impact and the NGO partner, they would have been sitting at home or been married off.*’

Being employed as a teacher had given them a very important opportunity to be economically self reliant and increase their self worth. Their earning ability has certainly enhanced their esteem in the eyes of the family members, both in their natal and marital families. They have established their relevance and earned respect and visibility in their families and in the community.

A change in the organisational stance made in the early years in the running of the Learning Centres was to shift the gender balance in favor of hiring more and more young women from the local community. This has proved to be an effective strategy in giving better results and learning outcomes at the learning centres.

Giving preference in hiring women and young girls who had completed class X and above over the ones with qualifications of having a graduate and B.Ed degrees was found to be to be very effective as it was found that these young women were willing and open minded to

learn innovative and child friendly teaching learning methods. The younger women are much more eager to take it and turn this as an opportunity for their personal and professional growth and empowerment. The girls in the learning centre identify very strongly with the young teachers as a role model and aspire to become a teacher like them in their village. In the new educational policy brought out by the government in 2019 it is suggested to have intermediate graduate level people recruited and trained as teachers for teaching children in the early school years from class 1 to V.

IIMPACT's educational model need to be assessed for its relevance in the fast paced changes being brought in under the new educational policy introduced in 2019 and changes in schooling system in the last 10 -15 years after the introduction of the RTE. In the new millennium there has been reported near universal rates of enrolment of children at the age of 6 years.

The challenges remain despite the large scale investment of financial and infrastructure resources made by the state in improving the retention rates of children with efforts going in expansion of the school education infrastructure and giving incentives such as free ship, uniforms for girls and children from tribal, Dalit and BPL and ensuring nutritional security with the provision of universalized mid day meal programme, ACER reports still shows a worrisome picture of poor quality education and failure to children to master the requisite level of learning competencies in the first eight years of schooling.

The relevance of running a model learning centre will increase immensely, if there is a well functioning state supported school with responsive and proactive community based accountability mechanisms.

Relevance: Overall Concerns and opportunities

In the above context, the IIMPACT and partner NGO model of having a group of 30 girls between the ages of 6-14 years with multi-level, multi-grade teaching by a single teacher from the community would need re-looking for staying relevant for the following reasons:

1. The number of out of school girls especially in the younger age group of 6-10 years has been progressively narrowing, nationwide. The younger age group from 6-10 years is mostly enrolled in the local government run schools to be provided within a one kilometre radius, mandated under the RTE. The children who are enrolled get the benefits such as a set of school uniforms, books, hot cooked mid day meals and highly qualified and trained teachers. However, the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the teaching learning in the government school remain uneven and very patchy. **The concern remains how to provide a model that supports children's learning and doesn't bypass the mainstream system. How does it help in strengthening the accountability of the mainstream educational system to de-**

liver upon the promise of good quality education to all children without discrimination! We are constantly reminded of the fact that NGO driven alternative models can neither replace nor can it meet the needs of economies of scale of educational interventions in a country of the size and complexity of India!

Corresponding to the above mentioned trend of high rates of enrolment of children in the government school, the age group of girls coming to the Learning Centre run by IIMPACT and the partner NGOs has also changed. Presently, the majority of the girls coming to the Learning Centres are in the age group of 10-11 years and above. The pedagogy and approach to meet the educational needs of older age groups of girls need to be seen differently.

2. Under the RTE act, those children who were never enrolled, are now enrolled but not attending the school regularly due to reasons of poor quality of education. **It would be pertinent to check the relevance of the using the age based criteria and also redefining who is to be called as out of school while making the outreach strategy for the IIMPACT – partner NGO learning centre. In the light of above, the definition of out of school girls need to be revisited.** Should it include and focus on never enrolled children? or those who are not going to the school because the school doesn't provide them with a safe, equitable, inclusive and socially and pedagogically appropriate education and learning environment? Or those who are not attending the schools and sitting in the classroom as they don't get to learn age appropriate learning competencies? In reviewing the definition of out of school girls, It is very important to take into account the unmet and varying educational needs of the girls in different age groups.

3. **This is a concern in the IIMPACT model that all the girls coming to the Learning Centre are seen and treated as children. Their gendered identity as girls with diverse age, class, location and ability doesn't get the due importance and attention in the design of the educational interventions** planned and implemented in the Learning Centres and in the community. These girls continue to face the structural barriers caused by inequalities and discrimination.

4. **It's important to see the educational needs of the older age group more sensitively from the gender lens and not treat this age group in a homogenous age bracket of 6-14 years. More importantly girls in the age group of 11 years and above can't be clubbed in a simple category as children.** This is the age of major transition from childhood to pre pubescence, early puberty and adolescence. **The physical, psycho- social needs of the girls at different stages of development and understanding of the diverse and complex cultural contexts need to be strongly placed alongside addressing the scholastic learning needs.**

5. There are challenges faced by the teachers to deal with varying learning levels of the students in the multi level and multi grade single teacher approach. Despite a very rigorous and sustained teacher training programme, the results vary depending upon the teacher's competence in taking up the new learning methods. **It is not easy to have multiple learning needs of different age groups to be addressed by a young woman who is building her own educational and life skills on the job.**

6. In the prevailing neo liberal, market and private sector dominated and receding state responsibility in sectors of education, health and social and economic security, rural girl children from diverse contexts of socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds are facing greater risks and have become more vulnerable. It is a test of relevance for any educational programme to respond to the health, education, safety, security and self-reliance related issues faced by the girls.

For the educational interventions to remain relevant in the future and respond to the challenges of the socio-political-geo context, IIMPACT would need to have a socially relevant and gender responsive education strategy. In developing its future roadmap, the approach would need to support girls for an uninterrupted 12 years of schooling and good quality education.

Since the girls who will be coming to the learning centre will increasingly be drawn from an older age group of 11 - 16 years, it will be relevant to see how to develop pedagogic tools and qualitative indicators to measure the risk and interventions for prevention of girls from getting into child-labour, child trafficking, early marriage and delayed pregnancy and in mitigating the harmful impact of the unequal burden of reproductive care and house-hold labour on girls.

Efficiency and Effectiveness:

Nurturing and working to put the vision of educationally empowered girls in reality has been a strong and recurring pitch of the board members of IIMPACT. To realise its vision, the mission of providing five years of uninterrupted education to the girls has remained an unwaveringly single point agenda of the organisation.

To accomplish its objectives IIMPACT has effectively built the programmatic edifice on:

- Ø Creating an enabling community support system- aware parents and an especially strong support and mobilisation of the women in the families and community forums;
- Ø Well trained and equipped pool of locally recruited teachers
- Ø Having capable and a critical pool of NGO partners for running the community based learning centre; Good interface and cooperation the community based plat-

forms and partner NGOs; advocacy and support for improving the government schools to respond to the needs of the girls education.

Sitting on the above pillars of strength, IIMPACT has been very successful in delivering on its outcomes and intended results. The implementation strategy with focussed activities and inputs provided in the Learning centre along with the active community level engagement has been successful in contributing effectively to reaching the outcomes of the educational programme of IIMPACT. The teachers, supervisors and NGO partners have been ably supported in implementation of the programme by the programme leadership, training and monitoring team of IIMPACT.

The Most Significant Pride Pointer for IIMPACT leadership and programme team and for its board of trustees has been in achieving a very high success rate of retention and passing out of the girls enrolled in the learning centres equipped with class V competencies. The success rate has consistently remained over 90% all through the organisational journey. The table of key performance indicators (Source: IIMPACT head office) given below is a testimonial to the success of the educational interventions of IIMPACT and its NGO partners.

Key Performance Indicators

Average student attendance	90 %
Average attendance of parents at monthly PTA meetings	90 %
Average student enrolment per Centre	100 %
Annual drop out rate	< 2 %
Active Panchayats	100 %
Maximum marks obtained in Class V	94 %
Girls getting first division in Class V exam	30 %
Girls passing Class V since inception (of those who appeared)	100 %

· **It's a professionally run low-cost model of multi-grade, multi-level teaching, currently costing Rs 1,15,000 p.a. per learning centre catering to a batch of 30 girl students run by one teacher. The low operating cost of running of the learning centres is an important factor in enhancing the efficiency of the approach.** Supervisors, project officers, advisors, etc. oversee multiple LCs, so their annual cost is split in proportion. Close to 90% of the funds received from its donors are spent specifically towards educating the girls. The overhead cost of covering the

rentals or infrastructure as the LC are kept minimal. The room for the learning centre is provided by the community.

- At present, Impact outreach is educating over 60,000 girls in 2,000 villages in 11 States of India. To date, over 40,000 girls have been through our system and moved on to higher classes.
- IIMPACT is preparing to develop the organisational expertise and managerial ability to scale up rapidly with its aim to educate up to 200,000 girls in the next 5 years.
- **Return on investment made by IIMPACT in social and economic terms has been very impressive.** One of the board members said that he has found IIMPACT as one of the most impactful NGOs working in the area of education in India. In comparison to other educational initiatives run by private entities, corporations and NGOs, where there seems to be a lack of public accountability for the money spent by the organisations, IIMPACT as an organisation has given highest importance to accountability and transparency in its financial and programmatic functioning. **IIMPACT has been very successful in raising funds from a very diverse and cross section of grant making sources.**

The financial and accounting systems

(A detailed note on the financial and accounting systems is annexed with this report)

Efficiency and Effectiveness: Concerns and Opportunities:

- Although the governance, management and MIS systems seem to be working pretty robustly in the organisation, there is a need for upgrading and building stronger and more responsive BCC and IEC strategy and MIS systems as the organisation aims to work for a larger scale of influence and outreach in future.
- In achieving greater effectiveness to achieve the intended results and in making a powerful social impact, IIMPACT would need to make systematic investment in re-orientation and rigorous capacity building of staff and frontline functionaries and all the important stakeholders to have greater ownership of the organizational vision and mission. Democratic, equitable and participatory decision making and leadership development at all levels need to be proactively promoted. The HR policies would need to be tailored to ensure gender sensitive and socially inclusive recruitment, team and leadership development and ensure organizational culture conducive to provide space for professional and personal growth.
- The leadership team in IIMPACT needs to be supported by the board and trustees in this process to provide capable and transformative leadership in developing IIM-

PACT's organizational strategy and road map, which is work in progress. The revised organizational strategy is likely to be rolled out by the middle of 2021.

- There is a rich pool of social capital of influential and committed people on the board of IIMPACT, that can be optimized to mobilize a much bigger quantum of resources than the present organisational budget of INR 20 crores.
- It is suggested to develop a resource mobilisation plan to be put alongside the organisational strategy and future road map, currently being developed. The resource plan can be a useful reference document to offer guidelines in meeting donor expectations and for mobilising the resources in the future in a systematic and sustained manner .

Creating an Impact

- The education model of IIMPACT, in delivering the high quality primary education to the girls has been able to have a very significant impact on the lives of the young girls and their families with improved indicators of gender equality and empowerment. The organisation has recorded and documented several stories of positive change in attitude of the families and the communities towards the girl and young women. The shifts were seen in terms of care and attention being given to the girls in their families in matters of food, clothes and in reducing restrictions on their mobility. There were scores of cases where the girls were able to convince the elders of the family with support of their mothers to pursue higher education in schools and colleges located at the block or district level. There have been documented instances by the organisation where girls had resisted the parental pressures and had refused to be married off.
- During the process of evaluation, it was observed that the success of seeing girls from very poor, marginalised communities becoming fluent in reading, writing, confident, aware and better informed has a transformational impact on the families and community , leading to the irreversible trajectory of change in the lives of the girls. The gift of education and the social dividend accruing to the girls and to the larger eco system opens windows for girls to chase their dreams , assert themselves with greater agency and have increased voice, earn greater pride, love, affection and respect from their families and community.

The celebratory and felicitating function of giving the fifth standard completion certificate which was earlier organised by IIMPACT and the partner organisation was taken over by the community to host it and it was a joyous sight to see the fathers , mothers and members of the community participating in large numbers and for girls it was a wonderfully liberating moment when they could come on the stage, cheered and clapped for their achievement, girls were dancing and singing and performing on the stage in front of the communities, which otherwise are considered very conservative in their atti-

tude to girls and women.. The community members contributed in small and big ways in making this a very special occasion. The community had adopted these girls as their stars, their *sheroes*. (source: from the interviews with the founding member and Ex ED of IIMPACT)

Girls from the learning centres in Alwar went on to class XI. Several girls went on to graduate from college. For her secondary schooling, one girl had to take a bicycle to go up to the point from where she could catch a shared tempo to reach the bus station from where she would take a bus to Alwar. She had called me up to inform me about her admission in the BA programme, She said, although she is happy to get admission in the college, she was disappointed that she didn't get psychology as her subject of choice. Later, she came back and joined as a teacher in the learning centre run by IIMPACT and the partner NGO in her village and is now working as a supervisor with the partner NGO. (Source: Interview with the Ex ED of IIMPACT)

- These winds of change have come from positive attitudinal changes in the way the value of being a girl in our society is perceived. It is hoped that these are irreversible changes. The pride of the community and their support to the girls is evident from the manner the girls are feted by the community. There are also outcomes such as improved mental and emotional health of the girls, improved nutritional, health and hygiene status of the girls which have been captured and studied in the special reports and documentation prepared by IIMPACT.
- Then, there are outcomes seen in terms of improvement in social indicators of delayed marriage and delaying the birth of the first child, these are outcomes which have been either inferred or reported as random cases from the ground. These outcomes haven't been assessed and measured through a scientific process of inquiry and evidence building.

Creating an Impact: Concerns and Opportunities:

- Investing in the knowledge management systems can be of critical value in making informed and empirical assessment of its achievements, successes and failures and challenges of the educational interventions of IIMPACT. As an illustrative example from IIMPACT's work in girls education, a list of proxy indicators of gender equality for girls empowerment could be developed to see whether and how IIMPACT's educational approach has helped in preventing girls from getting into child-labour, child trafficking, early marriage and delayed pregnancy, food and nutritional security,

girl child sex ratio and child mortality and education for economic empowerment ; mitigating the harmful impact of the unequal burden of reproductive care and household labour on girls and women burden of reproductive care and household labour.

- Similarly, outcome and impact indicators could be built into the IIMPACT's MIS and help build the theory of change of IIMPACT

Building Sustainability

- IIMPACT has built a successful, refined, scalable educational model that can be rolled out across states. The low-cost model of professionally run Learning Centres with the current unit cost of Rs 1,15,000 p.a, IIMPACT leadership team has expressed the confidence and ability for rapidly scaling up to educate up to 200,000 girls in the next 5 years.
- The ability of the organisation can be surmised from the expansion IIMPACT undertook from 2009 to 2019 as given below.

In 2009: 10,000 girls in 350 villages

In 2016: 45,000 girls in 1,500 villages

In 2019: 60,000 girls in 2,000 villages

- An important factor contributing to the success of educational approach of IIMPACT to be scaled up on a sustainable basis is the fact that more than 95% of the funds received from the donors are spent specifically as programme cost towards educating the girls. The overheads on rent, facilities and infrastructure for running of the LCs are kept minimal (only to be provided on a case to case basis) as the community is expected to provide the room and facilities for running of the LC-very often, just a thatched room 15' x 12' in size!
- Another important element in building sustainability has been achieved with a rigorous and systematic investment by IIMPACT in building capacities of the local partner NGOs and the community based teachers
- To ensure sustainability of the results and outcomes of the educational interventions, a lot of effort has been devoted by IIMPACT in building ownership of the communities to help, improve and to monitor the functioning of the Learning Centres. The NGO partners have been working with local communities on a regular basis and building relationships of trust and cooperation with other stakeholders in the community institutions.

Building sustainability: Concerns and Opportunities

- IIMPACT draws its confidence for sustaining and scaling up the proffered model with the committed support, continued guidance and expertise provided by the large pool of IIM and IIT graduates on the board and advisory body of IIMPACT. **Backing up the expansion plans with sustained thought leadership and creating a safety net of resources is the key to sustain the momentum of pushing forward with the organisation's agenda scaling up the proffered model.**
- It remains to be tested how the organisation prepares its future road map and strategic framework to work on the economy of a much bigger scale in the complex and challenging socio- political environment impacting the education sector in today's times!
- Concerns remain in the light of changes made in the FCRA law regulating the funding received and the spending restrictions imposed on the NGOs and the removal of the provision for allowing the NGO to make sub contracts with other NGOs from its budget. The girls education model of IIMPACT runs on the subcontracting arrangement with the pNGOs. IIMPACT has always maintained strict compliances with all governmental and other rules. As a result its FCRA status was renewed without any problems.
- **Questions of sustainability will remain to be asked with regard to the limited reach, resources and efforts of the NGO sector to address and respond to the magnitude of the problems faced in the mainstream education and schooling of girls.**
- **Although IIMPACT has provided a low cost and efficient girls education model, it remains to be seen how does the approach is sustained and adapted in scale and over time in addressing the systemic inadequacies of the mainstream education of quality , indifference to addressing issues of structural inequality.**
- The sustainability plan also needs to be situated in the realistic understanding of the capacity of the community and local NGOs to sustain the educational programme for the girls whenever IIMPACT decides to withdraw its support. It also remains to be seen as to whether and how the community based processes of CMC and supporting the locally built cadre of teachers for the learning centres continue to be supported by the NGO and the community.
- **IIMPACT would need to develop its organisational sustainability plan to address all the above concerns. Providing good quality education doesn't come cheap and it requires a long term investment in building the skills and expertise of running a quality based, large scale teaching – learning programme for children from the disadvantaged and vulnerable sections of the society.**

Dealing with the COVID challenge

- On account of COVID19 and the accompanying Lockdown which had lasted for most part of 2019, the Learning Centres (LCs) were closed from last week of March and had resumed partial functioning from September 2019.
- Covid pandemic had caused major disruptions in the organisational functioning, however, new ways of working and communication were learnt. As one of the programme managers had put it, “..earlier it was a face to face and very interactive hands on learning and teaching approach in the learning centres. COVID and the lock down forced us to think of new ways of connecting and brought us out of our comfort zone.” With its long standing reputation and commitment, IIMPACT was able to get the girls and families to respond to the alternative arrangements of running the educational programme. Where possible (as most of the locations are in remote and difficult to access areas), teachers are educating a few girls at a time, in open areas and where the teacher was not able to physically be present in the classroom, the telephonic medium was used to teach a small group of girl children who were brought at one location. During COVID, lock down times, teachers were the intermediary to reach the girls. When things become a little better later with the little ease of movement , the teachers started one to one interactions during the home visits for assuring the girls, parents and the community.
- APPI had provided invaluable support in the times of crisis caused by COVID’19 pandemic. With the assurance of continuity of grant and providing support for emergency relief to alleviate the rural distress by APPI, IIMPACT was able to support the payment of the teachers’ salaries and developing online, telephonic and digital based support for the monitoring, supervision and developing on line and audio visual based teaching- learning content in the COVID times. It was decided that during the lockdown period, IIMPACT will not reduce the salaries of teachers (it is Rs 4,400 pm/ per teacher). For the supervisors and project officers a 10% reduction in salaries was implemented during this time of crisis. A budget of Rs 7 lakhs from APPI and other donors was sought by IIMPACT to help equip a pool of teachers with smartphones and a few supervisory staff with laptops. The organisation has developed more established systems to deal with new situations during COVID times. Two phases of training were conducted during the COVID’19 lockdown period- the first one was on and about COVID info and being safe about it and in the second phase training was: how to live with COVID, more of the survival strategies for the teachers, children, partners and communities, breaking the myths, giving helpline info, reaching out to those who have been impacted, de-stigmatising the COVID. A formal SOP with safety guidelines to be followed at all levels in the organisation and in the learning centres was developed.

- A blended teacher training model was conceptualized to deal with constraints during COVID lockdown period caused by COVID pandemic. Wherever possible, teachers and supervisory staff were trained remotely with access to internet connectivity and availability of smartphones and laptops. The Head Office of IIMPACT has used the cascade model to run continuous education courses for the teachers that are smart phone enabled.

Dealing with the COVID challenge: Concerns and Opportunities

- Ongoing COVID pandemic times has brought tumultuous changes, causing immense disruptions and shocks in the educational ecosystem and bringing a paradigm shift in the teaching – learning and classroom pedagogy for which there was no preparation to make the switch and adapt to it.
- The challenges that remain due to COVID pandemic are due to the continuation of long drawn situation of uncertainty which has also adversely impacted the ecosystem of the funders, it has especially impacted the availability of the monies from the CSR pool and funds from private corporations and institutions as these institutions have taken a hit due to global economic meltdown caused by lockdown times of COVID pandemic. Consequently, IIMPACT has faced a funding shortfall as many of its existing long standing corporate donors have expressed concerns about their strained financial positions in the current financial year on account of the ongoing deadly pandemic. IIMPACT's budget had to be revised and provisions for increased allocation for digital communication, online content development and preparing and training teachers for digital teaching learning methodologies needed to be made.
- Shoring up adequate resources for preparing for the Post COVID situation and develop digital infrastructure, systems and competencies at all levels to deliver on the agenda of providing quality education to the girls will be a challenge for IMPACT.
- As we know that any disturbance to the system hurts the weakest and the most marginalised and the young girl is at the bottom of the pile. In the COVID pandemic caused situation of social and economic distress, there is widespread fear and real possibility of high number of drop out of girls and boys from the schools as the schools have not opened for 9 months in the current year and the uncertainty of the schools to open in the New Year further remains. Given the credibility of IIMPACT and its partner NGOs in providing regular, good quality education at their door steps, the organisation and its partners are faced with the challenge to not only sustain and continue but also respond to an increased demand to support girls education.

- **In building the post COVID educational strategy plan, understanding of gender issues impacting the girls education has become more insistent and urgent to address.**
- **In the post COVID scenario, IIMPACT would need to re imagine the work in the learning centres! This would require to review organisational plans for expansion; review and redraw its educational pedagogy and approach to provide digital connectivity, access and capacity building of girls, teachers, supervisory and programme staff to become part of a digital inclusive and enabled world ; modify the resource mobilization plan in dealing with the challenge for continuity of ongoing Learning Centres in the 2000 villages and respond to the new ways of online and digital learning platforms, psycho-social and mental health needs of the girls arising from the socio- economic crisis caused in the rural poor households by COVID'19 pandemic. There is an opportunity in the challenge posed by COVID pandemic to see how to transform the mind sets and attitudes towards girls and women through a process of digital empowerment.**
- **Post COVID could also be seen as an opportunity to step back to look beyond the immediate scope of filling the gap of unmet educational needs of girls and look at the questions at a more fundamental level as to what is in it for girls, how is the constituency of girls being received in the educational and developmental approaches adopted by the NGOs and donors in the current Indian social- economic and political context including in it the revised new national educational policy?**
- **This time could be constructively and creatively used as time for building organisational learning and knowledge base to take up systematic studies to deepen the organizational perspective and sensitivity to look at some of the persistent and entrenched structural gender issues pertaining to the reproductive and sexual health rights of girls, age of marriage, bodily integrity of girls, adolescents and young women, impact of pervasive and different forms of gender based violence, gender based discrimination and inequitable gender roles and relations on achieving the educational aspiration of girls, adolescent and young women These are the questions that IIMPACT would do well to come back to address in its educational strategy and road map that is being worked upon by the organization.**

A summary of the key strengths and concerns

Key strengths

Ø Over the last 18 years, IIMPACT has successfully built its programmatic edifice on a low-cost, professionally run model of multi-grade, multi-level teaching with a single teacher Learning Centre for a batch of 30 girl students with the current unit cost of Rs 1,15,000 p.a.. The girls educational model of IIMPACT has remained steadfast in its mandate to support the girls between 6-14 years in building their competencies for primary education level and encourage them to pursue their educational aspirations beyond elementary level. It is no wonder that IIMPACT has had an impressive arch of growth, expanding from 15 Learning Centres to 2000 Learning Centres with a high success rate of over 70000 girls from 100000 girls, enrolled in the Learning Centres, completing five years of schooling.

IIMPACT's can be celebrated, as one of the most successful indigenous and locally supported model in the country that has been developed and executed by a non state educational agency. IIMPACT's leadership has expressed the confidence and ability for rapidly scaling up to educate up to 200,000 girls in the next 5 years.

Ø IIMPACT's model can be considered for adapting to replicate and scale-up by other educational institutions at the local, state and national level for meeting the unmet educational needs of estimated 3-5 crore girls who continue to be out of school nationwide.

Ø Pedagogically a very sound teaching learning approach has been put in place to give foundational literacy and elementary education skills to the students accomplishing a very high rate of girls completing primary education and continuing to pursue education after the primary level. The approach has proved to be and continues to be relevant in providing quality and easy access to rural girl children from the remote locations, and socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Ø The education model of IIMPACT, has been able to have a very significant impact on the lives of the young village girls and their families with improved indicators of gender equality and empowerment of girls and women (ex. delayed marriage and delaying the birth of the first child), leading to the irreversible trajectory of change in the lives of the girls. The gift of education and the social dividend accruing to the girls opens windows for girls to chase their dreams, assert themselves with greater agency and have increased voice, earn greater pride, love, affection and respect from their families and community.

Ø The trustees and board members of IIMPACT have played a stellar role in building its reputation of integrity and respect of organisational work in the field, and have been actively steering the leadership, involved in overseeing the functioning of the programme on the ground with high levels of personal support and guidance.

Ø High levels of satisfaction on the return on investment expressed by the donors - leading to a progressively larger resource pool generated by IIMPACT besides a continued and long term support provided by a large community of individual and institutional donors; Building an economically sustainable unit cost basis model (With 95% funds kept for programme cost towards educating the girls, the overheads on rent, facilities and infrastructure for running of the LCs are kept minimal) in the running of the learning centres, keeping strict financial discipline and Financial transparency; ability of the trustees and board members to mobilize financial resources and mobilizing a large donor community is praiseworthy.

Ø The high rate of success has created a much bigger demand from the community, local NGOs and CBOs for many more Learning Centres to be set up; Higher levels of awareness and ownership by parents and community members, especially of the women has also created high credibility of IIMPACT -- girls and community keep coming back for advice, support and encouragement. In contrast, the girls and communities express a big trust deficit towards the existing schooling system in providing quality education to the girl children in a safe and healthy environment.

Ø Well trained pool of local teachers with scholastic inputs for teaching children up to class V- has given the young educated women in the community a very important opportunity to be economically self reliant, increase their self worth and enhanced their esteem in the eyes of the family members, both in their natal and marital families.

Ø IIMPACT has been successful in creating a capable and critical pool of NGO partners spread over 11 states for running the community based learning centre; a strong interface of the community and partner NGOs has created spaces for advocating and supporting the local school system to be more responsive to the education of girls.

Key concerns

Ø Although IIMPACT had grown from being a small scale NGO to substantively expanding its programme outreach, streamlining its systems and processes, putting in place smarter and efficient and ramped up programme management, MIS system, reporting, financial and accounting systems, the question of sustainability remain with regard to the limited reach, resources and efforts as an NGO in response to the magnitude of the problem faced in the area of girls education. **It would be helpful for IIMPACT to reflect and review its organizational strategy to ensure its future relevance in a rapidly changing and complex educational scenario in India.**

Ø IIMPACT is providing a low cost and efficient girls education model, it remains to be seen how the balance is struck in its organisations vision and approach between the deepening and widening of its gender responsive agenda in girls education programme and scaling up its interventions for girls education.

Ø In the IIMPACT model all the girls coming to the Learning Centre are seen and treated as children. Their gendered identity as girls with diverse age, class, location and ability doesn't get the due importance and attention in the design of the educational interventions.

Ø IIMPACT's approach is driven more as a beneficiary model, of being somewhat protective, paternalistic, benevolent in promoting the cause of in girls education. It also places a limitation to see education as serving a transactional and instrumental purpose of providing the tools of reading, writing and comprehension in the hands of the girls. Whereas, the experience of the girls coming to the learning centre has shown that the relevance and impact it had in empowering their lives goes much beyond the stated purpose. As one programme manager had pointed out that, *"we as an organisation need to build our capacity to be the change makers and quality enhancers and not be content to keep filling the gap left by poor quality education of the government school system"* A programme coordinator said, *"..our programme ideology is still driven by service of the poor, to give back to the society. We have received training to bring the shift in our perspective, to see that children are empowered to demand their fundamental rights... it's a challenge to shift it... to drill into the field.. it is still work in progress."*

Ø Despite a very rigorous and sustained teacher training programme, it is challenging for the teachers to deal with varying learning levels of the students in the multi level and multi grade single teacher approach. It is not easy to have multiple learning needs of different age groups to be addressed by a young woman who is building her own educational and life skills on the job.

Ø There is active involvement but little ownership of the girls and the community in the entire scope of the IIMPACT's educational intervention. IIMPACT and its partner NGOs work on the ground is very respected and well accepted within the community, however the interventions are seen as programmes run by outsiders for their girls. the question of building a greater ownership by the girls and the community remain s to be probed and addressed.

Ø The sustainability plan of IIMPACT needs to be studied in the realistic understanding of the capacity of the community and local NGOs to sustain the educational programme for the girls whenever IIMPACT decides to withdraw its support. It also re-

mains to be seen as to whether and how the community based processes of CMC and supporting the locally built cadre of teachers for the learning centres continue to be supported by the NGO and the community.

Ø The girls education model of IIMPACT runs on the subcontracting arrangement with the pNGOs. FCRA funds currently account for just 3% of IIMPACT funds. However, in the future resource mobilisation scenario, the concerns arising of the nature of contract with the pNGOs and with the grant mailing institutions, especially for seeking foreign funds need to be taken into account in the light of recent changes made in the FCRA law¹ regulating the funding received and the spending restrictions imposed on the NGOs and the removal of the provision for allowing the NGO to make sub contracts with other NGOs from its budget.

Ø The concern remains as to whether and how do the successful of interventions of IIMPACT will make a dent on the largely indifferent, exclusionary and poor quality educational approach of the local eco system of schooling and on the inefficacy and poor delivery of the larger educational system to respond sensitively to rural, poor girls who continue to be pushed out of the schools in large number and their educational needs remain unmet.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the insights drawn from the evaluation of IIMPACT's educational programme's areas of success, strengths and concerns, in the final section of the evaluation report, the conclusion and recommendations are made to The Philanthropic Initiatives and to IIMPACT's management and board members in developing their respective future course of action.

Conclusion 1: Time for consolidation, scaling up and diversification of girls education approach of IIMPACT

- The organization has expressed the confidence and ability for rapidly scaling up its successful, low-cost @ current unit cost of Rs 1,15,000 p.a, professionally run model of multi-grade, multi-level teaching with a single teacher community based Learning Centre to educate up to 200,000 girls in the next 5 years. The IIMPACT board wishes to raise its sights much higher and not be content with what IIMPACT has accomplished in reaching out to 1,00,000 girls in the last eighteen years. This understanding is located in the organisational understanding of a very large number of girls who continue to be pushed out of the schools and their educational

¹ Recently introduced national educational policy and recent Amendment of the FCRA act by the Indian state related to receiving foreign contribution by the Indian NGOs

needs remain unmet with an indifferent and exclusionary and poor quality educational approach to rural, poor children.

- IIMPACT's model can also be considered for adapting to replicate and scale-up by other educational institutions at the local, state and national level for meeting the unmet educational needs of the girls.
- There are different view points presented during the evaluation for scaling up and widening the approach of IIMPACT to girls education programme that need to be internally harmonised in the organisation.
- There is an expressed need for deepening and diversifying the educational work with the girls, community and to work strategically for increased responsiveness and accountability of the mainstream schooling system in providing quality, equitable and inclusive 12 years of uninterrupted schooling to all children.
- In developing the future road map, it is imperative for IIMPACT board and management to hold the mirror of sustainability, while working on the future organisational path and keep the balance between consolidation, expansion, deepening and diversification of IIMPACT's work in girls' education. **The view on sustainability need to go parallel with accountability and responsiveness of the state and civil society to ensure provision of quality and equitable education to all children and young persons.**

Recommendations for Conclusion 1:

1. For the scale up and replication plans for the future, a hybrid strategy model is recommended, offering a menu of educational approaches, in which IIMPACT could look at its role beyond its present role as an implementation and executing organisation. There are two key aspects to consider for the hybrid strategy model:

Ø Develop age differentiated and gender responsive educational strategies.

Ø Revisit the scholastic focus of the educational intervention of IIMPACT to be more strongly informed by the purpose of social empowerment of girls, adolescent and youth development

1.a It is recommended to develop gender sensitive and age responsive educational interventions for the girls. This also brings up the need to deepen the scope of girls education at IIMPACT with a further nuanced understanding of gender with intersections of factors from social, economic and cultural realm, and also issues of ability and location impinging on the gendered experiences of being, becoming and growing as girls, adolescents and young women in our society. It would also mean urging to unpack, include and address the impact on the girls living with multiple identities while being

on their educational journey (think of a girl from a land less, tribal, Dalit, religious minority, first generation learner, child bride!!).

§ **The recommendation is to help draw the attention to not see the girls in the age group of 6-14 years only as children.** In IIMPACT, the constituency of girls between the age group of 6-14 years is seen and treated as children in a patronizing way. The experiences of growing up for the girls in a span of 8 years between the age of 6 to 14 years are uniquely and highly gendered. The educational needs, issues and challenges faced by the girls within the given age cohort are very diverse and complex which can't be fairly and comprehensively addressed by using a same size approach.

§ **The meaning and relevance of education for a 6 year old, a 10 year old, 12 year old, a 14 year and 16 year old girl differs and changes substantially when viewed from a gender and child development lens. Additionally,** for the girls who are coming to the learning centres run by IIMPACT they face a complex range of challenges as they come from some of the most socio-economically and culturally vulnerable and marginalized backgrounds and remote locations.

1.b. IIMPACT and partner NGO supported model can be considered for adapting to replicate and scale-up by other educational institutions at the local, state and national level for meeting the unmet educational needs of girls in the age group of 6-14 years.

For the girls in the younger age group of 6-10 years, it is suggested to stay on course using IIMPACT's successful model of equipping the girls with scholastic abilities of primary school level at the pNGO supported learning centre.

1.c. It is suggested to make sports and physical education an integral part of the educational approach of IIMPACT. Putting sports firmly on the educational agenda, especially for the age group of 6-14 years is recommended support the developmental and gender equality goals for the girls. Giving opportunity to girls to experience the joy of free play and participating in different sports activities has proven to play a positive role in overcoming the gender barriers faced by the girls during their growing up years.

1.d. It is suggested to explore the possibility of designing an abridged and accelerated, residential or non residential learning programme for the girls who are not able to give sustained time over five years to come to the learning centre. Based on their credibility of running the learning centre in the community as a safe, creative learning space, IIMPACT and the partner NGOs can provide assurance to the families and the community to the advantage of accelerated approach to learning for the older age group of out of school girls.

1.e. It is suggested to design a set of strategies for the girls and young women in the age group of 15 -25 years- these are girls who have passed out from the learning centres and the young women who are teaching the girls in the learning centres.

§ It is recommended to effectively channelize the strength of a large pool of alumni of the Learning Centres is considered in planning the educational interventions in the communities. These young women can be nurtured as a strong resource base, to inspire, guide and mobilize scores of young girls in their communities to pursue their educational goals. They can be trained to be the thought leaders, to be the change leaders.

§ It is suggested to develop a tracking tool and have regular updating of the data base in the MIS of the status of girls who have passed out. Learning from NGOs working with adolescent girls and young women, IIMPACT could develop methods of organizing and mobilizing the girls in the communities.

§ Through a systematic process of identification, selection and an intensive teacher training programme, a pool of teachers, coaches and supervisory cadre could be built from the alumni of the learning centres. From the interaction with the girls in the learning centres during the evaluation exercise, it was inspiring to see many girls coming to the learning centres were finding their role models in the young teachers who were from the community.

§ It is suggested if IIMPACT and the partner NGOs could provide opportunities to the teachers for learning and professional growth to explore career options of their interest and choice. As the majority of teachers in the learning centres are young women and several of them are pursuing their higher education goals with the hope of growing their professional competence as they think and dream of expanding the horizons of their life beyond the boundaries of their families and villages. It will be interesting to explore the possibility of a collective platform for the older girls and young teachers provided by IIMPACT and the pNGOs.

To conclude, going forward, it is strongly recommended to IIMPACT and to continue with its core mandate of supporting the drop out girls to complete first five years of schooling. However, as a socially responsible civil society organization and as part of the development community, it is recommended for IIMPACT to raise the bar of aspiration to create a movement around educating, mobilizing, organizing the girls, adolescents and young women with a good quality, gender responsive and socially inclusive educational vision.

Towards creating larger systems of sustainability, it is recommended while continuing with its girls educational model and taking it up on scale, IIMPACT to review its strategies and approach in making the larger eco system of school education to be more responsive.

Conclusion 2: Shifting the service delivery approach of IIMPACT towards girls education to a rights focussed, gender responsive and equitable vision of girls education

Without taking away anything from a very successful girls education model built by IIMPACT and endowing several thousands of girls with educational capital and enabling impactful changes in the lives of the girls, their families and communities, it needs to be put in the developmental perspective that the organisation's approach is driven more as a beneficiary model, of being somewhat protective, paternalistic, benevolent in promoting the cause of girls education. As the mission statement of IIMPACT states, *"To provide free quality primary education to the girl child drawn from very poor and very disadvantaged communities"* followed with another statement of purpose that *"Educate a girl and you educate generations to follow"* It limits the purpose of education, more as an instrument for providing the tools of reading, writing and comprehension in the hands of the girls and seeing the purpose of educating the girls in transaction value terms. Whereas, the experience of the girls coming to the learning centre has shown that the relevance and impact it had in empowering their lives in shaping their destinies that goes much beyond the stated purpose.

Moving forward, learning from their rich experiences of the past 17 years, IIMPACT can make a strategic shift towards making the girls education as a rights focussed, gender responsive and equitable vision of girls education. It is critical to place education as a lifelong learning and empowering process for the girls in seeking their rightful place in the world of home, their communities and in the society as equal citizens of the society.

Recommendations for Conclusion 2:

1. It is recommended for IIMPACT team to engage to reflect and review its organisational theory of change and its strategic programmatic framework to understand the purpose of education for the girls to go beyond seeking the immediate gains and see its potential as a transformative and liberating process. Using the critical thinking, reflection, learning and change (RLC) approach and using feminist methods and tools of appreciative inquiry, the perspective building exercise can be taken up with all the key stakeholders.
2. It is suggested to have a sustained approach of engaging with the community, enabling girls to take the leap of faith in making the right and empowered decisions for themselves. This process should be done with the spirit of co-creating and ownership of every-

one concerned in ensuring rights based, gender responsive and equitable vision and mission of girls education.

Conclusion 3: Creating greater ownership of the girls and the community in the education interventions

IIMPACT and its partner NGOs work on the ground is respected and well accepted within the community, however the interventions are seen as programmes run by outsiders for the girls. The involvement of parents and community is to ensure that the girls are coming to the learning centre regularly. **There is active involvement but little ownership of the girls and the community in the entire scope of the IIMPACT's educational intervention.**

Presently the agenda setting is largely directed by the group of individuals who are on the governing board as trustees and founding members of IIMPACT. Till date, the board members have remained fully vested in planning, management, monitoring and execution of the programme activities and in raising of the financial resources for expansion of the educational activities for IIMPACT.

IIMPACT could judiciously set up processes for creating and sustaining greater ownership of the girls and the community in the educational programme.

Recommendation for conclusion 3:

1. Using Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) approach it is suggested that a dialogic space could be created for understanding the needs and challenges of the girls in accessing quality education and to have a more informed understanding of the diversity of contexts of the communities where IIMPACT is working. Building a bottom up process with active listening to the voices from the ground could be undertaken by IIMPACT in assessing the opportunities and challenges of building greater community ownership in setting the agenda of girls' education in IIMPACT. As part of the reflective exercise to be taken up in the organization, it is suggested to enable the girls to speak, to participate equitably in developing the educational goals, strategies, approaches and interventions of the organisation.

After working for 18 years, it is imperative to bring the desired shift for greater ownership and participation of the key stakeholders at all stages of the organisational processes.

Conclusion and Recommendation 4: Creating a strong system of knowledge building and MEL in transforming IIMPACT as a Reflective, Learning and Change organization

With the aim in the future to reach out to a much larger number of girls who are out of school and to work towards greater responsiveness of the mainstream education system , IIMPACT needs to take a more systemic and sustainable approach. IIMPACT's direct execution approach with support of the partner NGOs has its limitations of outreach.

Recommendations for conclusion 4:

1. To harvest the organisational knowledge and experience of IIMPACT's in running the educational programme for the out of school girls it is recommended to create an organised structure for systematic knowledge building and knowledge management in IIMPACT. Few areas of knowledge building are suggested as-

- § Develop pedagogies, competencies, tools, materials and training programmes, methods, frameworks for the primary education level,
- § Supporting children through distance education
- § Selection and training of teachers from the community
- § Bring out action research based papers and documents on the pedagogies of working with the girls from vulnerable and oppressed contexts.
- § Develop and document IIMPACT's organisational theory of change
- § Develop gender sensitive and socially relevant Behaviour change communication, BCC strategy, and digital communication strategy

2. Develop the Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework of IIMPACT to support its educational programmes. MEL is the way that to ensure that the good quality work being done is backed by evidence building. It's a process of reflection – helping staff/teachers to feel more connected and involved in the impact of the program, and to see the results of their work in a guided manner using the lens of gender and intersectionality.

3. A robust MIS could be used to: Evaluate the innovations that IIMPACT has done; Undertake action research and qualitative research and advocacy initiatives ; Undertake impact evaluation; Identify trends (both positive and negative) in order to make significant changes or improvements in the programs; Develop Accountability indicators - Accountability to the girls & community, Accountability to the organization (board, staff); Accountability to donors;

4. Use Outcome Mapping to rigorously review and define the indicators of community ownership and ownership by the girls of the programme.

5. Develop a more comprehensive results framework having the gender transformative process indicators looking at gender equality, social inclusion, defining empowerment of girls

and young women at the self, family, community and societal level; As an illustrative example from IIMPACT's work in girls education, a list of proxy indicators of gender equality for girls empowerment could be developed to see whether and how IIMPACT's educational approach has helped in preventing girls from getting into child-labour, child trafficking, early marriage and delayed pregnancy, food and nutritional security, girl child sex ratio and child mortality and education for economic empowerment ; mitigating the harmful impact of the unequal burden of reproductive care and house-hold labour on girls and women burden of reproductive care and house-hold labour.

Conclusion and recommendations 5: Building enabling, collaborative and equitable relationship with the NGO partners and Grant making bodies

- 1. In its 18 years of existence, the nature of relationship of IIMPACT with the NGOs and donors has remained largely contractual in nature, meant to support and manage IIMPACT's girls education model of running the learning centres in the communities. For future expansion and pushing for larger systems of sustainability of efforts to promote girls education, it is suggested for IIMPACT to invest in building partnership strategies, to look outside the typical boundaries of being a managing/ fund holding and implementing organization or as contractor and subcontractor organisation.**
- 2. It is suggested to cultivate processes of partnership building with the educational NGOs, civil society organisations, donors and grant making institutions partnership for a more equitable partner relationship.** Internally in IMPACT, a think tank could be tasked to address the implications of changes made in the nature of relationship between the grantee and subgrantee organisations under the newly amended national FCRA act and help the partner NGOs to address and engage with the current ecosystem around education
- 3. IIMPACT could explore the process of creating a platform, and support developing a consortium of organisations working in the area of girls education, in socio- economically backward areas, especially lagging on gender equality indicators.** This process is suggested to develop collective learning systems drawing from rich expertise and experience of the partners, grant makers and technical support organisations working in the key knowledge domains of girls rights, empowerment and education. The platform could provide for the long standing donors and partner NGOs of IIMPACT to seek potential ways of partnering and collaborations to work on scale and work on the intersection of gender and other crucial social dimensions impacting the education of girls.
- 4. It is recommended to take this approach to partnership building with the educational NGOs and great making institutions and CSR bodies to raise larger pool of resources, to look for areas of collaboration and joint programming; for creating**

more efficient and sustainable systems of programme and fund management; and MIS and knowledge management.

Recommendations for the The Philanthropic Initiatives

- 1. It is recommended to The Philanthropic Initiatives to support IIMPACT over a long term horizon of 5-10 years for future consolidation, scaling up and diversification of its girls education programme so as to meet the unmet needs and aspirations of an estimated 3-5 crore girls who continue to be out of school nationwide. The Philanthropic Initiatives could support IIMPACT to refine and scale up its successful model of running a MGML, single teacher managed Learning Centre in the community in a more sustainable and efficient manner.**
- 2. It is strongly recommended to the Philanthropic Initiatives to support the mandate of IIMPACT of helping the drop out girls to complete first five years of schooling.**
- 3. Scaling up and diversification of girls education approach of IIMPACT is also recommended to be supported by the Philanthropic Initiatives for uptake by other educational NGOs and mainstream schooling in the localised community contexts in providing quality, equitable and inclusive 12 years of uninterrupted schooling to all the girls.**
- 4. The Philanthropic Initiatives could support and coordinate the process for IIMPACT to upscale and adapt its LC approach for the uptake of the educational NGO partners of The Philanthropic Initiatives.**
- 5. It is recommended that a risk and opportunity assessment exercise be taken up by The Philanthropic Initiatives of the IIMPACT's learning centre model in impacting the mainstream school education eco system to respond to the unmet, indifferently and half met educational needs of the disadvantaged and vulnerable children.**
- 6. It is recommended to The Philanthropic Initiatives as the grant making institution in developing a collaborative and learning partnership model with IIMPACT, where the partner NGOs could draw upon the technical know how available with The APF, Azim Prem Ji University and the educational partners that The Philanthropic Initiatives is supporting through its vertical of girls education programme. The learnings and pedagogy of IIMPACT's girls education approach could be supported to be built as a shared knowledge resource for uptake by the state, civil society, CSR and great making and philanthropic bodies.**
- 7. It is suggested to support IIMPACT to build itself as a Reflective, Learning and Change organization for making a long term impact on the girls education in India.**

- 8. It is suggested that The Philanthropic Initiatives could support IIMPACT and its pNGOs in capacity building areas of teaching – learning and classroom pedagogy and working with the socially remote and vulnerable sections of the society.**
- 9. It is recommended to The Philanthropic Initiatives to support IIMPACT in developing the sustainability plan as well as its the resource mobilisation plan. The governing body of IIMPACT has a huge potential in mobilising resources and influencing the the mainstream educational and and developmental spaces. It is suggested to the Philanthropic Initiatives to help optimise the resource generating and change making potential of IIMPACT’s educational work with the girls.**