



IIMPACT QUARTERLY REPORT

APRIL 2016



OUR GRADUATES MAKE US PROUD

NEW PARTNERS JOIN HANDS WITH IIMPACT

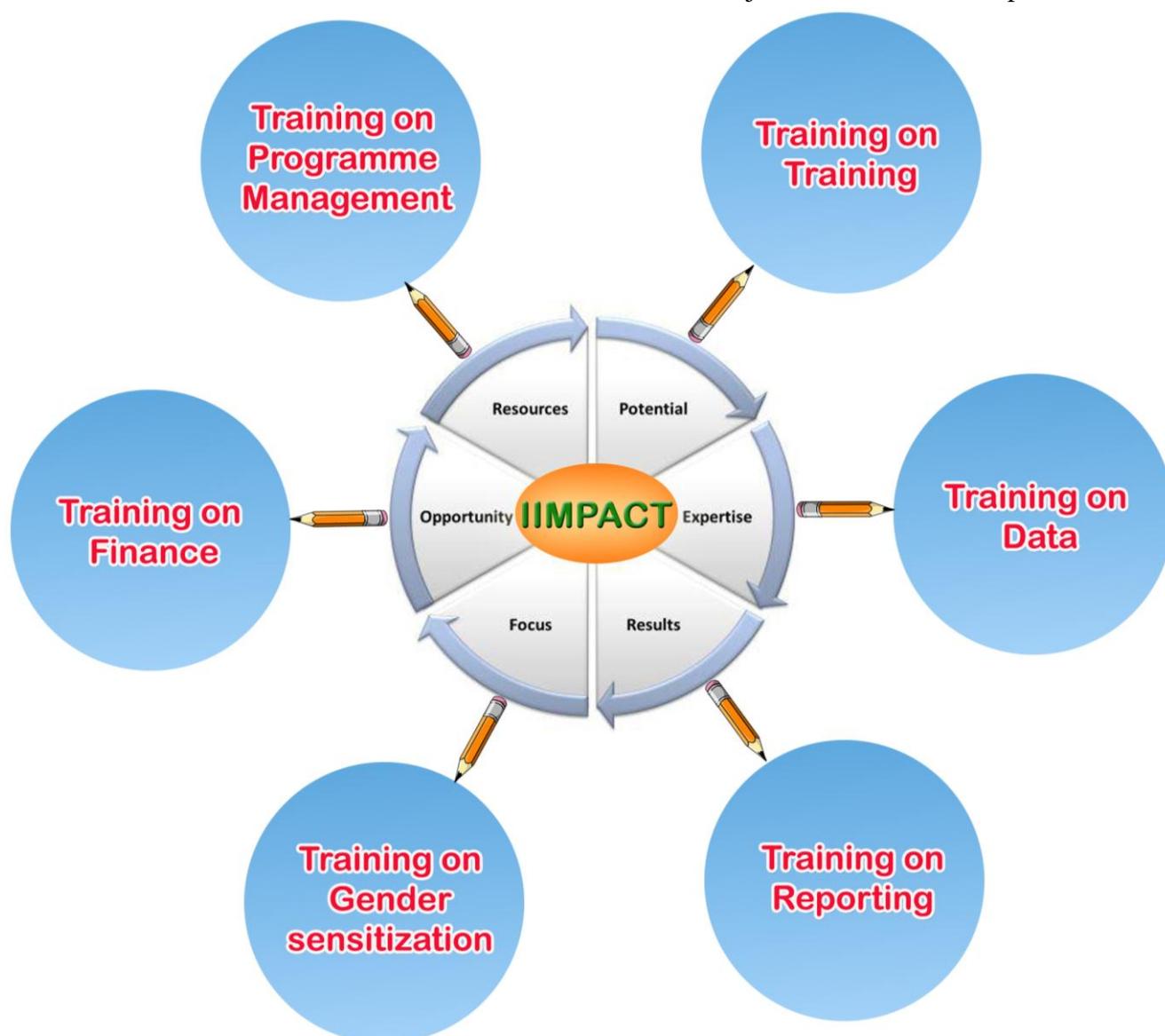


NEW INTERVENTIONS IN BACKWARD AREAS



REFRESHER TRAINING OF THE TRAINERS

In an ever changing and fast paced world, training and development is an indispensable function. The *Refresher Training of the Trainers* which was held at IIMPACT on 13th & 14th March 2016 was equipping the different level staffs to acquire new skills, sharpen existing ones, perform better, increase productivity and be better leaders. The training focused on all the components of program i.e. Program Management, Training Management, and Financial Management & Data Management. All the sessions were effective and informative. The overall objective of the workshop was to build



A clearer set of objectives was set and the participants mutually agreed that the programme helped to manage effectively the target activities, remove defects, improve synergies and ensured that that capacity building genuinely meets the needs of project activities. The experiences, skills, knowledge and interactive mode of presentation made facilitation friendly and lively. While the importance of

capacity building is widely acknowledged, more attention needs to be drawn to the identification and implementation of effective capacity building approaches. The ultimate goal of capacity building is to sustain a process of individual and organizational change and to enable organizations, groups and individuals to achieve their development objectives.

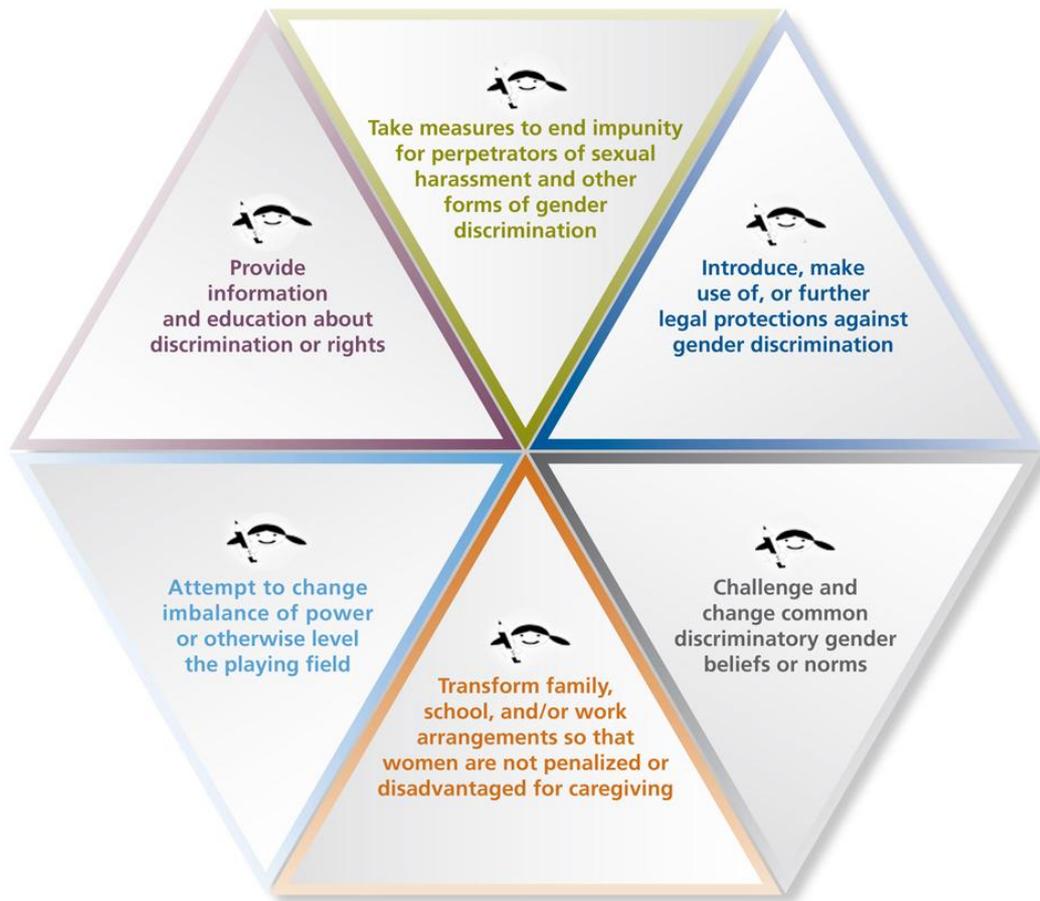


GENDER SENSITIZATION- Time to change the mindset

Gender sensitivity is not about pitting women against men. On the contrary, education that is gender sensitive benefits members of both sexes. Keeping this idea in mind IIMPACT organized training on gender sensitization. After orientation and warm-up activities, the team moved quickly toward an exploration of gender issues and identification of gender-based attitudes and behavior. Participants are “tricked” into discovering some of their own stereotyped assumptions about men and women, then guided through various activities in which they define and challenge the roles, responsibilities, rights and rewards that societies assign to men and women purely on the basis of their sex. The urgent need of including gender sensitization activities in IIMPACT girl child education project was discussed. Participants gave presentations and designed various activities which can be conducted in communities for gender sensitization.



The whole programme came out with Gender-Transformative Interventions.



Time to Test

Come April approximately 2110 girls of IIMPACT will be appearing for the class 5 board exams. The preparations are in full swing and the exams are just around the corner. We have full confidence that all of our IIMPACT girls will make us very proud.



After graduating these girls will become ambassadors of girl child education and be proud alumni of an IIMPACT learning center. In this quarter the journey of a class five girl will begin and the important role that her family plays in her journey of 5 years culminating in the time of the preparation of exam.



INTERNATIONAL Women's DAY



On the occasion of the International Women's Day, various activities were organized in our Learning centres. The girls participated in the rally in full swing and chanting slogans like "Dahej pratha ki hahakaar, band karo yeh atyachaar", "Agyanta ki diwaar todo, ladkiyon ko padao", "ladkiyon se hi toh sansaar hai, ladkiyan na ho toh sab bekaar hai toh Kyun hota hai ladkiyon ke saath atyachaar" etc. at the top of their voice. Post rally there were discussions on the general issues of the people of the community and the need to support the education of every girl child.



"Doyel Ghosh's search of a new life"

In the village of Mukundapur lives an innocent and playful girl, you might know her as Doyel Ghosh. A bright and cheery girl of 7 Doyel's life in no way reflected the happiness and hope in the girl's eyes. Having lost her father at the age of 5 and later abandoned by her mother who left Doyel to live with her new husband, Doyel had a rather rocky initiation into the early years of life. Yet she found solace in her nani's arms and in



the comforting world of education. Every moment that she immersed herself in the learning experience at the Girl Learning Centre in her village, she came closer to a better life, closer to making her father proud. Little did she know that soon the hope in her eyes was to be replaced by a silent misery. “October 2014” you and I may remember it as an ordinary date, but for Deyol it was the beginning of a terrible nightmare. Soon after her father’s demise, her mother had remarried and left Deyol to live with her new husband. However her nani’s unconditional love and the escape she found in the Girl Learning Centre at Mukundapur allowed Deyol to cope with the loss and abandonment. Unfortunately these too were stripped from the child when her mother suddenly came back to take her to her “new father’s” house. Though saddened by the prospect of leaving the only home she had ever known, ever the optimist she chose to see the silver lining: her mother had not forgotten her, she had returned for Deyol so that they could all be one happy family.

Thus with this positivity in her heart she set out on a new and exciting adventure, but the naive girl could never have anticipated the monsters that awaited her. In due course the ugliness unfurled, she found out that she had a step sister. Moreover it was to look after this baby stepsister that her mother had brought Deyol. She was turned into a veritable maid, forced to look after the child who was the centre of HER mother’s eyes. Added to this was the constant abuse she faced from her step father, who on occasion even bit her. Soon it became clear to Deyol that the mother’s love she longed for had been a mere ruse. This resilience and craving gave her the courage to risk her mother’s wrath and ask her grandmother to take her back. It was finally in February 2015 that this terrible ordeal ended and she was able to return home. She returned to the IIMPACT Learning Centre where she once again tried to replace the horror of the past with new hope for the future. Now as she swiftly makes her way up through the class levels, she is closer and closer to achieving her dreams. If you ever talk to her in class, look into her eyes you will be able to see the hope and joy that once again shines in them, however now they shine with a hint of greater resilience.

“Child with special needs”

How often have you been called special? Perhaps everyday by your mother, every week by your father and at least once a month by that random loved one. For you this term probably evoked a comforting sensation, a feeling of being loved and cared for. However, for Shyamoli this word proved to be the bane of her life, a nightmare she faced every day. Shyamoli Ray - “Child with special needs”, this was her identity.



Born with moderate mental retardation and orthopedic disability, Shyamoli suffered from not just physical but economic and societal disabilities as well. While her physical disability deprived her not only of the ability to talk, but snatched from her the comfort of being able to pronounce her own name. It was her societal and economic disabilities which further immobilized her, filling her with deep shame and dread. This shame would have eventually crippled her from within, had it not been for the efforts of the supervisors and teachers at the IIMPACT Girl's Learning Centre. Initially Shyamoli was enrolled in Sujapur Handicapped School, however her illness soon compelled her to drop out. At this point Shyamoli's parents forced to think of the welfare of Shyamoli's two siblings would have had to resign Shyamoli to a fate of an invalid. However IIMPACT's Learning Centre came along as their last ray of hope. Shyamoli got enrolled at IIMPACT as a school dropout in 2012. Her initial fear and shame were soon allayed by the support of the teachers. The community teacher took Shyamoli under her wing and taught her with great empathy and dedication. Her love and care emboldened Shyamoli, allowing her to overcome the crippling effects of her disability. Shyamoli is now studying at level 6 and is able to effectively communicate with others.

For the first time in her life she has friends with whom she can sit, laugh and forget about the harsh hand life has dealt her. For the first time she is surrounded by supervisors and educators who look beyond her physical ailment and encourage the vast intellectual potential within. And most importantly for the first time in her life the word special brings not tears to her eyes, but a smile to her face.

"A cry for help"

Mahatma Gandhi once said, "Be the change you wish to see in the world". We may dream of a better world, a progressive world with justice and equality. However this dream can only be realised if we reflect on another quote, "service before self". We at IIMPACT saw the need for such service in the world; we saw the severe lack of help where it was needed most. Hence we decided to make the first move and extend a helping hand without waiting for a cry for help. In February 2013, CINI in collaboration with IIMPACT began implementing "Girl Child Education Programme" in the district of Murshidabad. This initiative covering 20 villages in this obscure district seeks to ensure girl child education to about 700 girls; girls who have either never been exposed to education or have been



forced to drop out due to their unfortunate circumstances. One such village is Ramnagar Village, where the implementation of the IMPACT project along with the establishment of “Apanjan Girls Learning Centre” allowed a 6 year old girl’s cry for help to finally be heard.

This girl is Lakshmi. Lakshmi whose father is a daily wage labourer, and whose mother is a *bidi* worker. Lakshmi whose brother was relegated to a life of physical labour and whose sister is a ‘child with special needs’. Surrounded by such misery and hopelessness, Lakshmi could scarcely afford to dream of a better life, let alone demand it. Her situation was not one which would have been changed with the mere establishment of a school. Even the semblance of change in her life required persistent effort and single minded focus. The IIMPACT teacher recognized the task ahead of her and set out to accomplish it with the utmost dedication. She made house visits to the children’s homes and interacted with the parents. She made them understand the importance and necessity of education. The result of her unwavering commitment to affect change was that she succeeded in not just persuading Lakshmi’s parents but in completely winning over their support! Now Lakshmi regularly attends classes at the Learning Centre. Not only can she read and write, but she frequently recites poems in both Bengali and English. Her mother, although illiterate, is so inspired by the teachers at IIMPACT that she tries to contribute in any way she can-often by fervently encouraging other parents to send their children to school.

There are 40 other girls like Lakshmi in the Ramnagar Village learning centre, who too had never asked for help simply because they were unaware of the existence of a better life. We at IIMPACT have witnessed this horrible reality and together work every day to change it.



“A wake up call for Anita.....”

Every year she would tie him a *rakhi*, and every year he would make her a promise. She would tie him a Rakhi asking for love and protection, he would feed her sweets and tell her not to worry as he was there, her protector. Yet every year he would break that promise as without either of them realizing he had become the enemy she needed protection from. This is the story of Anita, a girl child. Born to a family of 7, Anita found that the discrimination in and around her was filling her with sadness. Both of her brothers were sent to school but she had to quietly sit and take care of domestic work. She had almost given up and was accepting this life as her fate, until Ms. Suman arrived at her house presenting her with a ray of hope. On becoming aware of



the Anita's condition Ms Suman realized the gravity of the situation and instantly began counseling her parents in the hope of protecting the child's future. After school hours at the centre Anima was supposed to do the domestic work and look after her siblings.

Her parents were still not ready to send her to school. However the opportunity to go to the learning center was denied by her parents. It was a wakeup call for her. She fought for her right with her parents and they finally agreed to send her along with her sisters to the learning center. She still does her house hold work after her classes. Parents are happy to see her performance and they do come for the regular meetings and keenly follow the progress made by their daughters.

This year Anita will complete her 5th class and is getting ready to be enrolled into a nearby government school for her further studies. Her dream is to become a teacher and return to IIMPACT team to educate more girlss who are less privileged.

“Ms. Suman, the teacher from learning center exclaimed “I have never seen a passionate girl like her. I now know what will be there for her future. She has become the role model for all the girls in our learning center.”



“My village, my problem –I am the solution!”

Suhani* (12), a girl from rural Rajasthan, used to regularly go to school until a few years ago. Unfortunately, Suhani struggled to make progress in reading and writing and had no way of getting help to improve her learning skills. Her parents felt that she wasn't gaining much at the centre, therefore they put a stop to Suhani's schooling. Suhani was then confined to cooking, cleaning, fetching water, handling the cattle and taking care of her younger siblings at home.



IIMPACT Teacher, Rani went door-to-door within Suhani's village and identified Suhani as an out-of-school girl. She spoke to numerous families, including Suhani's, urging them to educate their daughters. Suhani's parents were convinced that she couldn't really benefit much from school. Excelling at household chores would be far more advantageous. After all, serving her husband and his family was her destiny. What was the point of investing in her education? The entire community shared this way of thinking.

Suhani says, “When Rani ji spoke to my parents it had been 3 years since I dropped out of school. I did not know the importance of or feel the need for education. How could I? Most of the girls in my village were working at home, like I was, or were already married. It wasn’t odd. I didn’t know there was something else I should or could be doing.”

Many villagers were not always open to listening when approached individually. People weren’t comfortable with the idea of sending their adolescent daughters to school. Often, the parents were afraid that their girls could “get out of hand”, which would be a shortcoming as they were approaching marriageable age.

One day Suhani found great courage - gathering other friends she went to the nearby learning center. She enjoyed being with several friends and learned many things. But she never could have known what was lurking around the corner. When she reached home in the evening, she was badly beaten by her parents for not looking after the buffalos and instead going to the center. Suhani did not allow this to get her spirits down. Next morning she fed the animals and once again went off to the school with her friends. Her parents took this matter up to the panchayat council. Accusations were raised against the teacher and the center. Some demanded that the center be closed down. The panchayat head took all of them to the center. But what they saw surprised them. They saw little girls reading and writing. Great transformation through mere experience. From that day on they send all their girls to the learning center.

Suhani is considered a hero amongst the girls. Suhani is used to hearing this but this comment never ceases to bring a smile to her face.



EDUCATION
IS A GIFT FOR LIFE

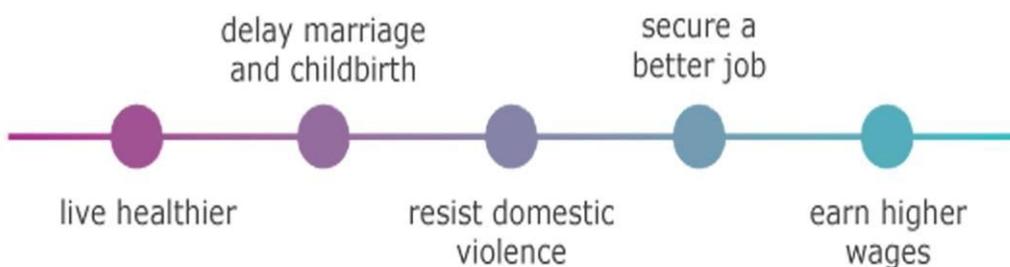




IIMPACT Making a difference since 2003

WHY GIRLS?

When you sponsor a girl, you give her the chance to ...



and **break** the cycle of poverty.