



Making a difference

Quarterly Report July 2016

The Story of My Life

I WILL NOT GIVE IN

When Sabina turned 13 her life changed. Her parents were no longer her guardians and saviours, they had transformed into her tormentors. She no longer believed in childhood or innocence but relied on her instincts for survival. She lived in fear and constant pain. Physically they beat her, psychologically they ripped her apart. For what? She did not want to marry. She told them it was her choice and they wanted to prove that choice was a mere illusion in her life.



Prior to this she had been a star student. Her younger sister went to the ICDS centre but neither Sabina nor her brother was enrolled in school. Sabina started at GLC from June 2012. When the abuses restarted, she urged her friends to inform the teacher. She could not escape by herself. The teacher was horrified and immediately came over to help.

Sabina helplessly watched from her window as her teacher was repeatedly turned away by her father. Finally, two days later her father was willing to meet the teacher. Sabina listened to their arguments in silence. Her father's stubborn nature and conservative outlook were both difficult to penetrate, the teacher carried on trying to make him understand, but to no avail. A few days later the supervisor, a PRI member of the village, the head master of nearest High School and an ASHA worker visited the house. Sabina once again listened as they repeated their pleas but failed in their attempts. One of them finally threatened to inform CHILDLINE and the police.

Her parents now stopped looking for a husband for her, as prominent members of the village, and others, warned them of the consequences. This however was not the end of Sabina's ordeal. She informed her teacher about her parents' plans to send her to an uncle in Kolkata. She was filled with fear, saying that she had never met this so called 'uncle' and was worried that she would be trafficked if sent to Kolkata. The teacher along with the Supervisor and the PRI member again came to her rescue, now Sabina regularly attends the centre and is determined to continue with her education.



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 a random loved one. For you this term probably evokes 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" - was her identity.



Born with moderate mental and orthopedic disability, Shyamoli suffered from not just physical but economic and societal disabilities as well. Her physical disability deprived her of the ability to talk and 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 the 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 relegate Shyamoli to the fate of an invalid.

IIMPACT's Learning Centre came along in their village and was 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 her teacher. 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 ailments and encourage the vast intellectual potential within. Most importantly for the first time in her life the word "special" brings not tears to her but a smile to her face.



DOYEL GHOSH'S SEARCH FOR A NEW LIFE

In the village of Mukundapur lives an innocent and playful girl, you might know her as Doyel Ghosh. A bright and cheerful girl of 7 whose life in no way mirrors 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 Doyel 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 again.



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 back. 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 hit her. Soon it became clear to Deyol that the mother's love she longed for had been a mere ruse. Her own 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 and 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 more than a hint of resilience.



DON'T STOP BELIEVING

Monika takes a moment to compose herself before entering her house, her happy memories of her day at school making her smile. She didn't want to step inside and be overtaken by the deep-rooted discords in her family or the problems that plagued them. She takes a breath and enters. The first thing she hears is the bickering between her mother and grandmother, her infant brother is crying in her mother's lap being swung into a troubled sleep. They take a moment out of their argument to acknowledge Monika. They give her a welcoming smile, and then resume yelling. She prays that one day they will sort out their differences.



She starts her chores for the evening. Her mother has come back from the fields a while ago with a sore and hunched back but does some work before attending to the infant. Her father comes back at night, tired from driving the tempo. Monika cooks for the family and begins to study in the silence of the night.

Monika is only fifteen and yet takes care of others in the family. She passed out of 5th class from the IIMPACT Learning Centre in 2010. She now studies in 11th in a government institute. She hasn't been able to follow her own path. She wanted to take commerce subjects in the 11th but economic hurdles prevented it.

Monika wants to be a police woman. She says she can solve and prevent injustices better that way. Her economic conditions cast a bleak shadow across her future. She wants financial aid from IIMPACT. Monika tries not to get discouraged; she keeps a smile on her face and hopes for the best.



SHE HAS A DREAM

Aarti always dreamt of going to school, playing with other children and learning from books she never owned. Her mother, a single parent, had other plans - to marry her off at a tender age of 12, and avoid the burden of supporting a girl child endlessly. Aarti courageously fought back, emphasizing the fact that she wanted to study and make a life for herself, before getting married. IIMPACT stepped in realizing the urgency of the situation. Met her mother and discussed the evils of child marriage. After much persistence, her mother relented and broke down admitting that community members, familial pressure and prevalent outdated notions influenced her. Today, thanks to her mother's understanding and acceptance of the problem, Aarti is in a fortunate position. She can determine her own fate. She has great dreams - she wants to be a Doctor so that she can help others.



EACH ONE OF US IS SPECIAL

Meet young Lakshmi who lives in Ramgarh Village in Murshidabad. Lakshmi was once surrounded by misery and burdened with the responsibility of looking after affairs at home. Her father a labourer, her mother a bidi worker, her brother relegated to a life of physical labor, her younger sister is a 'child with special needs'. In all this Lakshmi remained invisible. In recognition of the fact that Lakshmi deserved better and that she needed to feel special, to grow as an individual, IIMPACT's local Teacher diligently followed up with visits to Lakshmi's house, urging all members to give Lakshmi's education some importance so that she may, in turn, improve their lot. Today Lakshmi feels very special. She now goes to school, she can read and write and loves to recite poems in Bengali and Hindi. From being unaware of the existence of a better life to wanting more out of life, Lakshmi and many girls like her, are now part of IIMPACT's education program.



ANITA ESCAPES DANGER

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 Anita was supposed to do the domestic work and look after her siblings. Her parents finally relented and are happy to see her perform well in class.

EACH ONE OF US IS SPECIAL

Flashback - Anjuman tries hard to study under the light of a flickering bulb. It finally goes out..... She fumbles for a half melted candle, the small flame barely illuminates the fine print in her text book. She hunches over, nose brushing the pages and reads, until the candle burns out. You wouldn't believe that young Anjuman is married - she was 14 years old when she was betrothed. Her sister is also married into the same family where she lives and faces constant tirades from her in-laws about being illiterate. This really is not Anjuman's sister's fault.

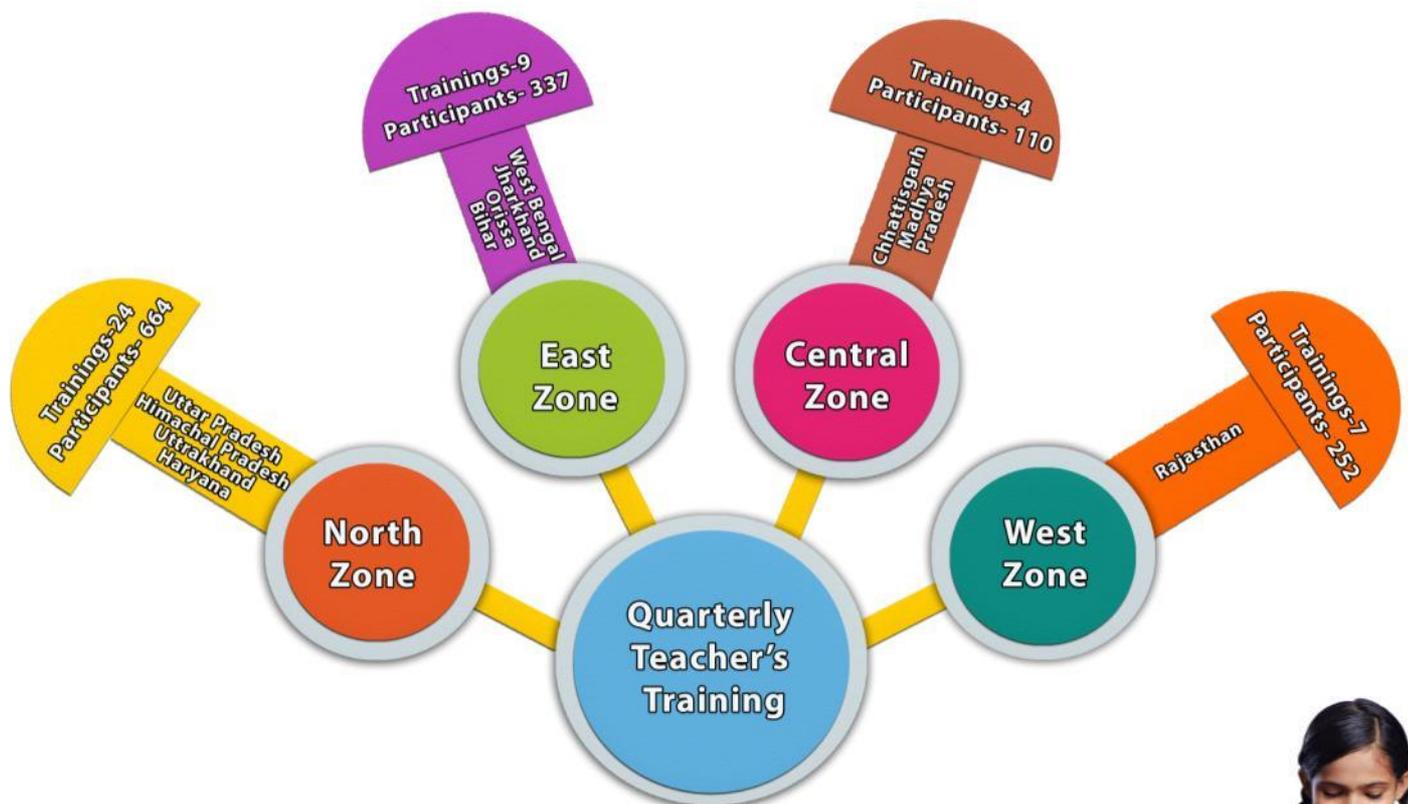


Fast Forward to today - Anjuman is 17 years old and studies in the 11th Grade. She does not want to suffer the same fate as her sister when she moves into her husband's home. She wants to complete her education before moving so that she may lead a life filled with dignity and respect. There will certainly be light in Anjuman's future thanks to the power of Education!



TRAINING

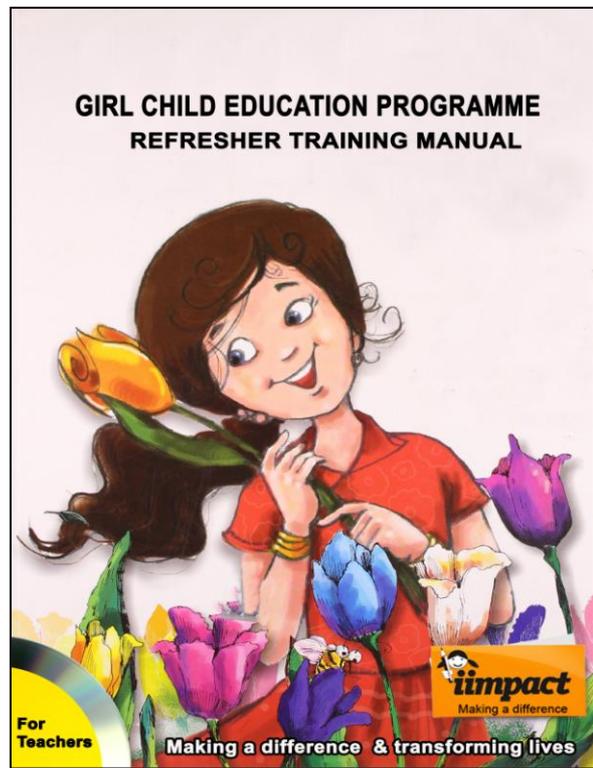
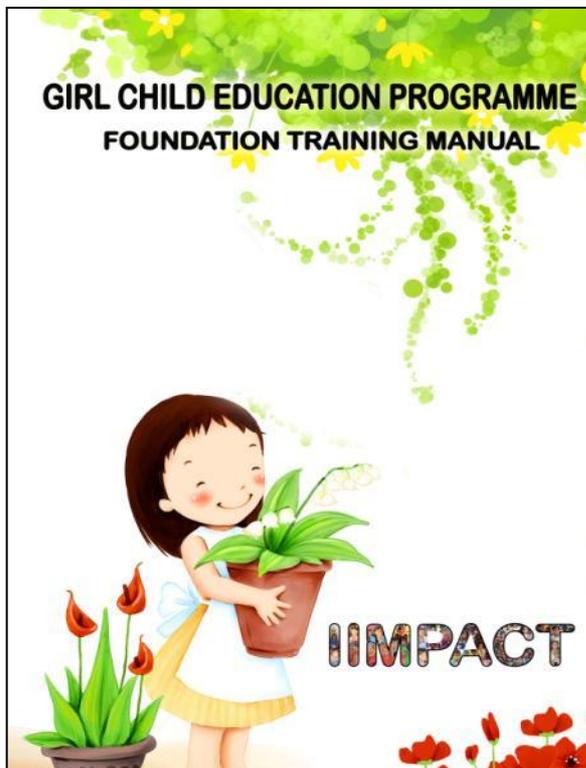
The Quality of Education is constantly emphasized at IIMPACT through extensive teacher training workshops. IIMPACT not only seeks to make all girls at the LCs literate, but also good learners through quality education. Supportive teaching materials like picture cards, games, charts and models have been developed by expert resource teams and volunteers are provided. Each training session incorporates case studies, readings, reflective tasks, and – most importantly - opportunities to apply and refine these practices in the classroom. IIMPACT is now proud to have a national-level Training Resource Centre by which it furthers research about new and engaging methods of education. IIMPACT lays emphasis on a motivational training system as the organization wants to keep the teachers engaged & challenged. Consequently, teachers are encouraged to deliver results they can be proud of. Not only is regular training imparted at the grass-root level, master trainers are also brought in on a regular basis. This ensures that fresh methods are adopted frequently throughout the system.





Refresher Training Manual for Primary Classes:-

IIMPACT resource centre team prepared a new Refresher Training Manual for primary classes. Field teams of trainers received feedback from the learning centres' teachers that some states have changed their books & curriculum, and they are facing challenges on the ground. Based on the 'felt need' of teachers, the resource centre team has made relevant changes in the Refresher Training Manual.





ON A BICYCLE PATH TO EDUCATION

On the 14th of July, two cyclists, Prisiliya Madan and Sumeet Paringe began an extraordinary journey, a journey traversing the length of the country in its entirety. These passionate cyclists will travel from the southernmost city of India, Kanyakumari, to one of the highest motorable roads in the world, the Khardung La Pass, covering a prodigious 4,400 kilometres. Sponsored by the Godrej Group of Companies, this duo aspires to raise an amount of at least Rs.50 lacs to donate to IIMPACT with the aim of sponsoring the education of 1,500 girls for a year at IIMPACT Learning Centres. What is unique about this initiative is its comprehensiveness. The two cyclists will be riding on environment-friendly Godrej-designed bikes that were assembled using bamboo, and hence are putting their foot forward on the path of sustainability and ecological preservation. IIMPACT wishes them all the best in their endeavour to reach their destination and achieve their targeted funding amount.

Passion, determination and innovation come together for a good. This dynamic duo need support. Visit: www.fueladream.com/home/campaign/275

2 cyclists. 11 states. 4,400 kms

Here's why two Panvel-based cyclists are pedalling through a gruelling 70-day journey from Kanyakumari to Khardung La on bamboo-framed bikes



The cyclists, (from left) Sumeet Paringe and Prisiliya Madan at the starting point in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu



The Cool Bamboo bikes

US-based Craig Calfee, a designer of the bamboo bikes, was invited by Lawkim Motors Group (a business unit of Godrej and Boyce), to replicate a sustainable model for India. "Bamboo's tensile strength can exceed that of carbon fibre, aluminum and steel. Steel does not absorb that many shocks but bamboo can," says Thota. Moreover, the manufacturing of bamboo frames does not require a reliable electrical source, making it possible to build the frames in impoverished areas, that can't support traditional manufacturing facilities.



KRUTIKA BEHRAHALLA
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AS YOU read this while sipping your morning cuppa, two Panvel-based cyclists — 26-year-old Sumeet Paringe and 22-year-old Prisiliya Madan — may be crossing the Karnataka state border to venture into Telangana, after 12 days of continuous pedalling having started from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu. "The southern most point of India is blessed with three things — the Vivekananda Rock, an endless coast and rejuvenating calmness. But I will remember it for the stormy winds we encountered when we started cycling on NH7. Another honourable mention from the first day was the temperature, a whopping 44 degrees Celsius, and there were no trees planted by the road sides!" says Paringe, in an email interview.

Interestingly, the cyclists are riding Godrej's specially designed sustainable bamboo-framed bicycles, which are supposed to be lighter and stronger than several steel-made bicycles. "The bamboo bikes have been a great partner until now as we can cycle for almost 100 kms a day," he adds. However, this is just the first leg of their journey. Over the next 28 days, the duo will cycle all the way to Khardung La, a snow-capped mountain pass located in Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir. And all this, for a cause.

For the girl child

The cyclists are part of a campaign to support the education of the girl child, initiated by IIMPACT, a Gurgaon-based NGO established in 2003, by the alumni of IIM-Ahmedabad. Up for cross-funding on FuelADream.com, the campaign has managed to raise over ₹10 lakh out of its overall goal of ₹50 lakh. "In India, educational opportunities for girls from socially and economically disadvantaged communities are minimum due to lack of schools, gender discrimination, broken families and safety concerns. IIMPACT focuses on primary education of underprivileged girls, from six to 14 years of age, who have never gone to school. The group teaches girls how to read, write and calculate, with the system of teaching taking

them from junior kindergarten levels to Class V in achievable stages. Through the initiative, we aim to support the education of minimum 1,500 girls," informs Nirmala Tandon, CEO (Honorary) at the non-profit, adding, "While the cyclists are on the road striving towards their aim to reach Khardung La, we wanted to help them raise funds for the cause they are riding for. So, the campaign will be up for the entire duration of the journey."

The crowdfunds will be distributed among the NGO's centres in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Jharkhand, Orissa, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

Meet the pedal pushers

Though young, both cyclists have a vast experience of traversing India on a bike. While Paringe completed a solo ride from Panvel to Khardung La in 2014, Madan took up a bicycle journey from Panvel to Kanyakumari this January. They've also been part of group expeditions. "A journey this long requires passion and endurance. When we met the cyclists and told them about the cause, they were equally excited about it," informs Tandon.

With an aim to reach Khardung La by mid-September, the cyclists will cover 11 states including Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, New Delhi, Haryana, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir, which amounts to a rigorous 4,400 kms. "Since the journey is from South to North, the terrain becomes even more difficult. Given that we are in the middle of the monsoon, the terrain is expected to be rough, and landslides are expected as the cyclists reach the northern part of the country," informs Ranganath Thota, founder at FuelADream.

Given their experience, the duo was entrusted to chart the itinerary on their own, but a breakdown vehicle is following them on the route. "The cyclists will ride an average of 70 kms daily with one/two day stops in Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Paratwada (in Amravati), Bhopal, Agra, New Delhi, Shimla, Manali and Leh to rest in between the ride," adds Thota. In Maharashtra, the cyclists will pass through towns like Bhokar, Pusaad, Karanja, Paratwada and Btel. LOG ON TO www.fueladream.com



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Cheque given by Arundhati Bhattacharya, Chairman, SBI to Nirmala Tandon, CEO, IIMPACT



Signing of MoU with Dr. Sarika Kulkarni, CEO, IIFL Foundation

SBI FOUNDATION
IIFL FOUNDATION



“My name is Ishaan Singh. I am 15 years old and study in the 10th standard at Strawberry Fields High School, Chandigarh. I was associated with IIMPACT for a month. Working with IIMPACT has changed me; working on the field, actually interacting with the girls who I have been writing about, allowed me to better understand the struggles many girls face in rural areas of India. I hope these stories inspire the reader as much as they have inspired me.



“My name is Ritvik Verma a student from The Shri Ram School, Mousari, pursuing 12th grade. Working closely with the humble employees at IIMPACT has been a tremendous experience that I would not trade for anything else in my life. I have learnt to imbibe values of selflessness and empathy by seeing the day-to-day functioning of the organisation. I have tried to utilise my critical skills to write various analytical and area-specific case studies to shed light on the prevalent issues of the Indian society such as geographical hindrances that bar education, orthodox malpractices and provision of sub-par quality education. I sincerely hope that I have contributed to this noble and extraordinary organisation at least a fraction of what it has contributed to my life. Thank you, IIMPACT.”

