

**Quality Education: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning**

SDG – Sustainable Development Goals

**Case study – Girls Learning Center – Helping Girls to continue their school education confidently**

<p><b>Name of the submitting organization</b></p>	<p><b>SAKHI for Girls Education</b> <a href="http://www.sakhiforgirlseducation.org">www.sakhiforgirlseducation.org</a></p>
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<p><b>Title of your contribution (Case Study)</b></p>	<p><b>Girls Learning Center - A community based girls education program</b> <i>( Helping slum girls to continue their school education confidently)</i> <i>(Creating safe and quality learning spaces for girls from slum areas)</i> - <b>An initiative by Aarti Naik, a slum-based young girl Changemaker, Mumbai, INDIA.</b></p>
<p><b>Description of case study (Upto 1,500 words)</b></p>	<p><b>Aim and objectives of the program:</b> <b>Girls Learning Centre – A community based girls education program</b> <b>Aim -</b> Every girl should able to continue her school education confidently with quality learning. <b>Objectives –</b> 1. To create ‘safe and quality learning spaces’ for girls at their slum community 2. To improve the quality of girls’ basic education with life skills 3. To ensure that every girl is going to school regularly and learning well 4. To empower mothers to lead their daughters education confidently 5. To ensure that every girl is healthy in slum area <b>Location (country/region/city):</b> Girls Learning Center is based in suburban slum areas of <b>Mulund west, Mumbai, INDIA</b> <b>How was the project, program or intervention developed (explain briefly the strategy, process and who was involved)?</b> Girls’ Learning Centre emerged from Aarti Naik’s experiences of working with girls from slum area. It provides a safe and quality learning space</p>

where girls come together to learn. Girls Learning Centre offers a community-based basic education programme especially for building basic literacy, numeracy, and life skills of slum girls with a lifelong learning approach. It helps to build the confidence of girl to continue her education.

**An inspiring story of Aarti Naik and her journey of developing an educational initiative – Girls Learning Centre.**

Aarti Naik is a slum based Young Girl Changemaker from Mulund west suburban slum area of Mumbai, India.

She has been staying in a slum area of Mulund (w), Mumbai since her birth. *Nine year ago, she was a 10th std. school dropout girl and there was no hope to continue her education.* Because of her family's poor condition, lack of proper guidance at home & community and poor focus on quality education at school, she failed in 10th std. and hence she became a one School drop-out girl and parents insisted her to stay at a home.

She strongly wanted to continue my education but due to poor conditions of parents, she decided to work and to continue her education. Hence she did not give up with situations, but at initial stage, it was very hard time for her to move ahead confidently and to come out from such challenging situation.

But she was not aware of any work in outside world, so she started to prepare ladies chains at home. Some women from neighbors were doing the same things, so they helped her to get such work. **Every day she used to get 9 rupees of her work.** She worked for three years continuously. Then she started her education with the help of her three year earnings and some money from her parents. Hence after three year she passed in 10th std. exam.

While she was studying, many thoughts came in her mind that whatever difficulties she had faced during her school education, her slum based girl will face the same situation. Also in her slum area, there is not supportive environment for girl's education. There is a lack of awareness about the education of children especially for girl child. These girls are facing so many socio-economic problems to continue their education. Based on her own school life experiences, she realized that her slum based girls' lacks in basic literacy and numeracy skills, so they fail to cope up with their formal school. So therefore she felt that something should be done for her slum girl's education. But who will do it? Answer came in her mind - Yes! I Can!

But there was not any support for Aarti to help her slum girls. As a slum girl it was not easy to come out from home and support her slum based girls. Her struggle started from home to get permission from her parents for working with her slum girls. She started to talk with her friends, fortunately someone suggested her about Ashoka's Youth Venture. It was turning point of her life.

Ashoka's Youth Venture provided her Changemaker Fellowship. She got new identity that "I am Changemaker!" and also she got small financial help for one year. They build her confidence that **"Yes! I can Dream it! I can do it!"** With the help of their continuous capacity building workshops, initially she started to conduct basic educational capacity building classes of primary school going girls. Then during August 2008,

she started her social venture “SAKHI for Girls Education” (*SAKHI means a female friend of girls who inspire, guide and support other girls for their good cause.*), especially for slum girl’s education.

Hence based on her own life challenges and ongoing experiences of working with girls with special focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills and life skills, gradually she developed a community based educational program – Girls Learning Center. The major purpose was to create safe and quality learning spaces for slum based girls at their own area.

**What where the key activities of the program?**

1. Daily Capacity Building Classes
2. Life Skills Building Sessions
3. Reading and Writing Promotion
4. Extra-Curricular Activities
5. Girls Saving Bank Activity
6. Weekly Books Distribution (Door to Door Library)
7. Girls – Mothers Get Together
8. Girls Nutrition Support

Every day in the evening during 5.00 pm to 8.30 pm around 70 girls come to Girls Learning Center. Female teachers build reading, writing and speaking skills of girls. Also, they focus on building numeracy skills and life skills of girls.

**What where the main achievements / milestones of the program (quantitative and qualitative)? Please mention the output, outcome and impact details clearly.**

Since 2008 Aarti Naik has been leading – Girls Learning Center, during these nine years more than 300 girls got benefitted from the educational activities.

The biggest achievement is every girl is continuing her school education confidently with quality learning.

Slum based girls showed clear understanding of the basic concepts of language and math. It provided strong foundation to build their basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Girls showed remarkable progress in reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in local language.

Girls build their basic numeracy skills and they are able to read and write numbers, carryout basic operations such as addition, subtraction, division and multiplication, etc.

Girls build their self-confidence to face day-to-day challenging situations at home, school and slum community level with building life skills such as public speaking, self expression through writing, conversation with peers, good critical thinking, etc

Girls reading and writing habits cultivated through various activities such

as story-telling, sharing new information, playing educational games, free writing, sharing experiences through writing and participation in action songs, so in long run slum girls will become good reader with effective writing skills.

**What were the key factors that facilitated the success of the program or impacting the SDG(s)?**

\*Aarti Naik, a slum-based young girl Changemaker strongly took leadership to lead girls education program at her slum area. Her passion to educate girls inspired everyone at slum area. Gradually she became an ideal role model for girls and mothers from her slum community.

\*Before 2008, there was not any space for girls and mothers to come together for their own educational capacity building activities. But with the strong leadership, Aarti Naik created safe and quality learning spaces at slum community for girls and mothers. It provided continuous ample of life-long learning opportunities for girls at their own slum community. Initially it became quite challenging to convince local key people to get space for girls' educational activities but gradually people realized that it is benefitting to their daughters.

\*At slum area, girls got trustworthy female friend, a SAKHI for Girls Education! So girls started to share their day-to-day personal and educational challenges. Small group interactions become very powerful strategy to understand the problems of girls at home, community and school. So based on these insights, slum-based young girls and women were selected as a Sakhi for girls education. They became a teacher and became role model for other girls. Also, it became cost-effective intervention to provide continuous safe and quality learning platform to girls at slum area.

\*Learning basic concepts of language and math with clear understanding is very essential in primary education. As per the experiences of Aarti Naik, a slum based young girl Changemaker, most of the slum girls left behind in their academic progress only because they failed to understand the basic concepts in their formal schooling. So while working with girls, she firmly believes that a strong foundation in basic concepts is positively correlated with quality learning outcomes and remarkable academic progress.

\* Greater involvement of mothers in their daughters' education became one of the best key factors to ensure the success of Girls Learning Center – a community based girls' education program. Mothers were continuously provided platform to be part of various kinds of educational, cultural and recreation activities at slum community. Also, mothers participated in exposure visits at Malls, Theatre, Libraries, children's recreational places, workshops on health and nutrition, etc. Hence gradually mothers understood the importance of girls' education and they realised their role in shaping the future their daughters.

	<p><b>In which ways could the program has been improved (lessons learned, crucial aspects for replication, implications for future policy and practice work etc.)?</b></p> <p><b>After nine years of experience, Aarti Naik, Changemaker has following insights from Girls Learning Center – a community based girls education program:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Identifying and encouraging grassroots changemakers is highly necessary to bring out positive and sustainable changes in the lives of girls and women from poor communities in rural and urban areas of India. Building an ecosystem for changemaker where concerned stakeholders need to understand the needs, challenges and limitations of grassroots changemakers in mobilizing resources for good cause, so they will able to bring out the expected change with more effectively. During the initial four years, Aarti Naik, a changemaker struggled a lot to mobilize the resources to continue her Girls Learning Center at her slum community, so she earned money from part-time job and she continued her girls’ education work. She never gave up with odd situations and she continued her work with available resources.</li> <li>* Every girl is in need of SAKHI, a female friend of girls who inspires, guides, and supports other girls for a good cause. Specially, slum based girls are more vulnerable, after school, there is little academic support or guidance available for slum girls at home or in their community. So in such situations, girls need continuous support and guidance, so they will able to continue their school education confidently with quality learning. Hence slum-based young education changemakers, a female mentor need to take initiative to educate and empower girls and their mothers.</li> <li>* Often we experiences that formal school system fails to provide expected support and guidance to girls who are living and learning in difficult situations. So in this context, grassroots changemakers and long-term community based girls education program play an important role in creating safe and quality learning spaces for girls from slum areas, it build their confidence to continue their school education with quality learning. Also, it gives visibility to girls’ education at community level and gradually local stakeholders consider it as a top priority in their decision making.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Success stories and/or quotes (150 words)</b></p>	<p>If you have a quote or statement from an evaluation or user satisfaction survey and the permission to use these quotes, they may be added here to illustrate the success of your case study. Supporting documentation must be provided separately.</p> <p><b>Inspiring aspirations of girls who are part of Girls Learning Center:</b></p> <p>Because of nine years of struggle of Aarti Naik, Changemaker to educate girls from slum area, many girls successfully completing their secondary and college education and they are moving ahead confidently to achieve their future aspirations. Please find the some of the quotes of girls from slum area:</p>

	<p><i>"I have dream to become a pilot and I wish to make it proud for my parent!" - Kirti Jagdane, Std. 8<sup>th</sup> (13 years)</i></p> <p><i>"I am studying in 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Mechanical Engineering Diploma, I will complete my higher education, so I will have good job, I will earn enough money to have decent home, hence my parent will able to leave this slum area and they will stay in good home, I will do it by 2025 definitely!"</i></p> <p>- <b>Snehal Pawar</b>, Mechanical Engineering Diploma (Age -17 years)</p> <p><i>"I would like to be a fashion designer and I have a dream to travel around the world with my parents" - Prerana Donde, 9<sup>th</sup> Std. (Age – 14 years)</i></p> <p><i>"I have dream to be Collector (IAS Officer) and so I will able to give justice to poor people whose homes (land) taken by government and I will fight against this injustice and I give back such land to poor people again". - Akshada Sable, 8<sup>th</sup> Std</i></p> <p><i>"I will become a doctor and I will provide treatment to poor people" – Prachi Devre, 5<sup>th</sup> Std.</i></p> <p>Ref : <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= PJhUPERDSA&amp;t=511s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= PJhUPERDSA&amp;t=511s</a></p> <p>(Aarti Naik, the SAKHI who sows the seeds of education in Mumbai slums)</p>
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<p><b>What are the three key messages from this case study in relation to the relevant SDG(s)</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creating safe and quality learning spaces for girls at community level and grass-root education Changemakers leadership need to be cultivated with supportive ecosystem in urban and rural area</li> <li>2. Building capacities of community based young females, so they will become barefoot teachers and it is cost-effective solution to address the issues related with quality education to girls from slum areas.</li> <li>3. Creative and Cost-effective Teaching and Learning Material need to be available to build basic literacy, numeracy and life skills of girls from slum areas</li> </ol>
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<b>Website / Video Links</b>	<p>In case there are <b>any relevant links to website or video</b> illustrating the case study, please mention here:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CNN, IBN – A story of Aarti Naik, Changemaker, Mumbai, INDIA (Year 2009) <a href="https://www.facebook.com/SakhiForGirlsEducation.India/videos/734050816656873/">https://www.facebook.com/SakhiForGirlsEducation.India/videos/734050816656873/</a></li> <li>2. <b>Lady of Revolution - Aarti Naik, Mumbai, INDIA 2016</b> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twF-LNyANC4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twF-LNyANC4</a> (need to sign in gmail) <a href="https://vimeo.com/272179264">https://vimeo.com/272179264</a></li> <li>3. Aarti Naik, the SAKHI who sows the seeds of education in Mumbai slums (1<sup>st</sup> July 2017) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJhUPERDSA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJhUPERDSA</a></li> <li>4. TOTAL HI-PERF Ride For Legends - A Change Maker (13<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2018) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLX8na4_0yg&amp;feature=youtu.be">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLX8na4_0yg&amp;feature=youtu.be</a></li> <li>5. Making way for education &amp; equality in Mumbai’s slums (April 22, 2017) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tECPOOLEHmU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tECPOOLEHmU</a></li> <li>6. Learn about the Girls Learning Centre, Mumbai ( 11<sup>th</sup> Sep. 2012) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bc-gdHY-lj8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bc-gdHY-lj8</a></li> </ol>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Aarti Naik - A Changemaker Educating Girls Living in Slums (4<sup>th</sup> Aug 2017) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhclVIAWS7s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhclVIAWS7s</a></li> <li>8. Aarti Naik   Femina Women’s Award for Education (25<sup>th</sup> July 2017) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sArO5J5BNXk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sArO5J5BNXk</a></li> <li>9. Aarti Naik - Empowering Slum Dwellers through Education (1<sup>st</sup> Aug 2017) by The Better India <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZfL7e6lmlw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZfL7e6lmlw</a></li> <li>10. Watch this unique school that promotes education of girls (9<sup>th</sup> July 2017) – By ZEE News <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4h2lb7O4NU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4h2lb7O4NU</a></li> <li>11. Facebook Page – SAKHI for Girls Education, Mumbai, INDIA <a href="https://www.facebook.com/SakhiForGirlsEducation.India">https://www.facebook.com/SakhiForGirlsEducation.India</a></li> <li>12. Website – SAKHI for Girls Education <a href="http://www.sakhiforgirlseducation.org">http://www.sakhiforgirlseducation.org</a></li> </ol>