

Shaping Educational Futures

1. Executive Summary

Seva Mandir seeks support for **‘Shaping Educational Futures’**, a three-year initiative to strengthen educational continuity, aspirations, and future opportunities among adolescents and rural youth in Kotra Block. Through a community-based mentoring and guidance system, the project will support young people, including Shiksha Kendra (SK) alumni, to continue their education, explore educational, vocational, and livelihood pathways, access relevant opportunities and support services, and make informed decisions about their future.

The project will directly engage adolescents and rural youth across 11 villages, with SK alumni forming the primary target group while aspiration-building, counselling, and guidance support will also be extended to other interested adolescents. By helping young people identify and pursue pathways aligned with their interests, aspirations, and circumstances, the initiative aims to enable them to achieve positive educational and livelihood outcomes.

Seva Mandir seeks support of ₹10,61,415 over three years to implement the project.

2. Background and Need for Intervention

Kotra Block, a remote tribal region of southern Rajasthan, continues to face significant challenges in children's education. Poverty, seasonal migration, household responsibilities, early marriage, limited parental education, lack of academic support at home, low educational aspirations, limited awareness of higher education opportunities and scholarships, and inadequate access to career guidance contribute to irregular attendance and school dropout.

In addition, school-related factors such as the quality of the learning environment, student engagement, and the relevance of education to adolescents' aspirations can also influence retention and continuation in education. Addressing dropout therefore requires a holistic approach that considers individual, family, community, and school-level factors. While enrolment in primary education has improved over the years, sustaining children's participation in education beyond the primary level remains a challenge, particularly during the transition to secondary and higher secondary education.

An analysis of 190 SK alumni in Kotra revealed that 52% dropped out between Grades 6 and 12. The dropout rate increased significantly at higher grade levels, with 8% dropping out during Grades 6–8, 11% during Grades 9–10, and 33% during Grades 11–12. These findings indicate that retention becomes increasingly difficult as children progress to secondary and higher secondary education.

The findings highlight the need for continued support beyond primary education to help adolescents remain in school, access educational opportunities, and make informed decisions about their future. The proposed project seeks to address this gap through an alumni-led support system that promotes educational continuity, reduces dropout, and strengthens educational aspirations among SK alumni.

Adolescence is a critical stage when young people begin making decisions related to education, skills, careers, and livelihoods. However, many rural youths lack access to information, role models, mentoring, and guidance required to translate their aspirations into achievable pathways. As a result, educational aspirations often remain unrealized, leading to school dropout, disengagement from

learning, and limited livelihood opportunities. There is therefore a need to create structured support systems that help adolescents identify their aspirations, understand available opportunities, and pursue educational, vocational, and livelihood pathways that can enable them to achieve their goals.

3. Project Goal and Objectives

The project goal is to strengthen educational continuity, aspirations, and future opportunities among adolescents and rural youth in Kotra Block through a community-based mentoring and support system that helps them pursue pathways aligned with their aspirations.

The key objectives are:

- Improve educational aspirations and access to educational, vocational, and livelihood opportunities among adolescents and rural youth.
- Reduce dropout and strengthen educational continuity among adolescents studying in Classes 6–12

4. Strategy and Interventions

The proposed three-year initiative will establish a community-based support system for SK alumni across 11 villages of Kotra Block. Two educated SK alumni (having completed Class 12 or above) will be selected as Shiksha Sahayaks and trained to mentor adolescents, track their educational progress, facilitate access to opportunities, and mobilize families and communities to support continued education.

The key interventions are as follows:

- **Capacity Building of Shiksha Sahayaks**

Shiksha Sahayaks will receive structured training and mentoring on aspiration mapping, adolescent counselling, life skills facilitation, scholarship access, open schooling opportunities, career guidance, vocational pathways, community mobilisation, and digital tracking. Capacity building support will be co-created through collaboration with experienced partner organisations working on adolescent development, aspirations, life skills, career guidance, and youth transitions.

- **Adolescent Mapping and Aspiration Tracking**

A village-level mapping exercise will be undertaken to identify SK alumni as well as other interested adolescents in the target villages and document their educational and aspiration status. The mapping will help identify adolescents who are irregular in attendance, at risk of dropping out, pursuing higher education, seeking vocational opportunities, or already out of school. Information collected through the mapping process will be used to develop individualized aspiration and support plans and monitor progress throughout the project period.

The aspiration mapping process will help adolescents articulate their interests, strengths, and future goals and identify pathways required to achieve them. Individual aspiration profiles will be developed and periodically reviewed to support informed decision-making and track progress towards personal goals.

- **Adolescent Groups and Aspiration Building**

Village-level adolescent and youth groups will be formed to create peer support networks and encourage continued engagement in education, skills development, livelihood planning, and future

opportunities. Regular meetings facilitated by the Shiksha Sahayaks will help participants reflect on their aspirations, explore educational, vocational, and livelihood pathways, and develop individual plans to achieve them.

Special emphasis will be placed on helping rural youth understand and navigate pathways that can enable them to fulfil their aspirations, including higher education, vocational education, entrepreneurship, skill development programmes, employment opportunities, and livelihood options.

Life skills sessions focusing on communication, self-confidence, decision-making, problem-solving, leadership, gender equality, and digital literacy will be integrated into these meetings to strengthen the knowledge, skills, and confidence of participating alumni.

The meetings will support adolescents regardless of whether they choose formal education, vocational training, open schooling, skill-development programmes, or other pathways aligned with their interests and aspirations.

- **Engaging Families and Communities**

Shiksha Sahayaks will conduct regular home visits, counselling sessions, and follow-up meetings with alumni and their families to reinforce the importance of continued education, particularly for girls and adolescents at risk of dropping out.

For adolescents who have disengaged from formal schooling, mentoring support will focus on helping them explore alternative pathways including open schooling, vocational training, skill development, and livelihood opportunities. They will support re-enrolment, facilitate admissions into formal and open schooling systems, assist alumni in accessing scholarships and government schemes, and coordinate with school teachers, Panchayats, and community leaders to strengthen educational continuity.

Youth who have completed schooling will also receive mentoring and guidance to access higher education, vocational training, skill-development programmes, apprenticeships, employment opportunities, and government support schemes relevant to their aspirations.

A digital adolescent tracking system will be developed and maintained to capture information on educational status, aspirations, support provided, opportunities accessed, and progress towards individual goals. The system will support continuous mentoring, timely follow-up, and evidence-based programme management

5. Target Area and Beneficiaries

The project will be implemented in 11 villages of Kotra Block. The primary beneficiaries will be adolescents and rural youth, including SK alumni studying in Classes 6–12 as well as youth who have completed schooling and are exploring higher education, vocational training, employment, entrepreneurship, or livelihood opportunities. Aspiration-building activities, mentoring, counselling, and guidance support will also be open to other interested adolescents in the target villages.

6. Expected Outcomes

- Reduced dropout and improved educational continuity among adolescents.
- Increased educational aspirations and future readiness among adolescents and rural youth.

7. Proposed Budget

The proposed budget outlay is ₹ ₹10,61,415

S. No.	Budget Head	Activity Details	Unit	Unit Cost (₹)	Quantity	Total Amount (₹)
1	Shiksha Sahayak (SS) Honorarium	Honorarium for 2 Siksha Sahayak @ ₹8,000 per month	Month	16,000	36	576,000
2	Training and meeting	3 training of 3 day each for SS and staff	Training	13,500	3	40,500
3	Travel	For Siksha Sahayak and staff	Month	1,500	36	54,000
4	Collaboration and Technical Support	Co-creation, capacity building, development of aspiration-mapping tools, life skills modules, digital tracking system, and periodic mentoring support	Year	100,000	3	300,000
5	Salary	Part salary of 1 staff	Month	5,000	12	60,000
	Total					1,030,500
6	Administrative cost	3% of program cost	Year			30,915
Grand Total						₹ 1,061,415

8. Conclusion

The project will support adolescents and rural youth during the critical years when decisions regarding education, skills, careers, and livelihoods are made. Through aspiration mapping, mentoring, guidance, family engagement, and access to educational, vocational, and livelihood opportunities, young people will be empowered to identify and pursue pathways that align with their aspirations. Beyond reducing dropout, the initiative seeks to build a supportive ecosystem that enables rural youth to make informed choices and fulfil their aspirations while strengthening their long-term educational and livelihood outcomes.