



# Pilot Silai School Project under Gram Siddhi



# The Problem



Women belonging to marginalized communities of rural India spend most of their time doing household labor, which is unpaid and often, unacknowledged. Some of them, engaged in the informal sector, sustain on an irregular income at the hands of exploitative employers. Life is even more difficult for widows, who need to singlehandedly support themselves as well as their children.

Due to inadequate exposure, these women are unable to ascertain the enterprises for self-employment. In fact, most of them have a very low self esteem as they undervalue their constant toil. However, when provided with the right opportunity, guidance, training and resources, many of these women would be able to rise and secure an alternative source of livelihood for themselves.

# “Gram Siddhi” in a Nutshell

Gram Siddhi will be Aavas Foundation’s new signature program for providing skill-based training and employment opportunities to rural women: the initiative was launched recently to broaden the horizons of our women’s employability and entrepreneurship development endeavors. The goal is to transform their persona, to foster financial literacy and self-reliance, to make them confident and to indirectly help support their families.

In course of time, we aspire to generate a handful of female leaders in the domain of small and medium-size enterprises, who can serve as an example for the rest. Below are the 4 key areas of focus.



Silai School



Financial Literacy



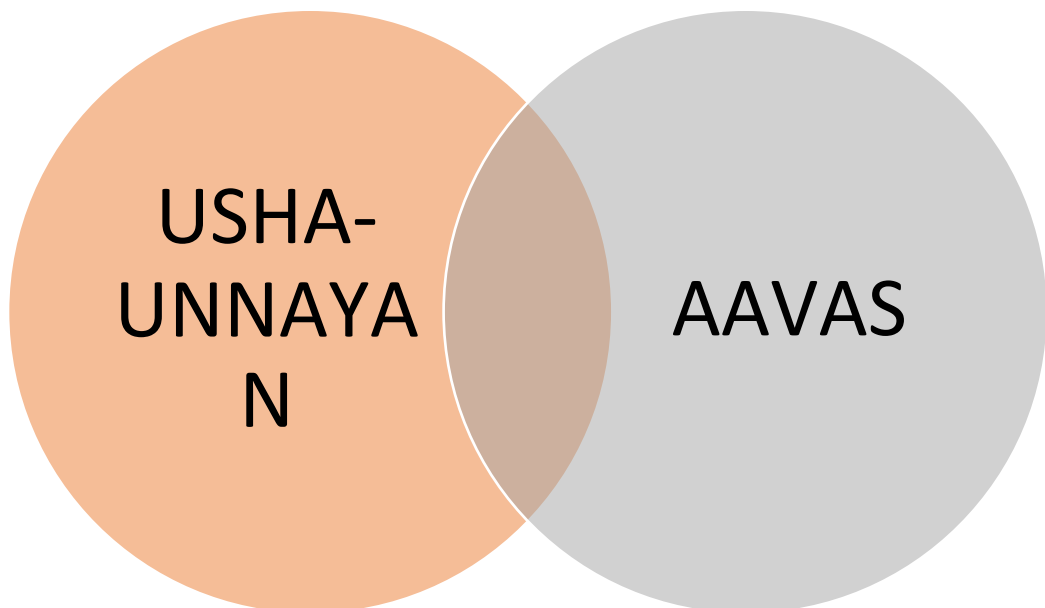
Education



Self-Help Groups

# Pilot Project: Aavas-Usha Silai School

Aavas foundation has partnered with two NGOs, Usha Silai School and Unnayan, for providing sewing and stitching-based training to rural women. The project has been funded wholly by Aavas while Usha and Unnayan are the grassroot-level implementing agencies.



# Aavas-Usha Silai School: Partners' Profile



Usha Silai School is a community-based initiative which targets financial empowerment of women belonging to marginalized groups. The term 'silai' means stitching and sewing. Hence, under this program, motivated women are chosen by Usha from underprivileged communities and are provided 7-days training on sewing and stitching skills. Inaugrated in 2011, the program has resulted in setting up of 23,554 silai schools across India and 123 such schools in Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan. The Silai Schools are based on self-employment model and are typically opened in clusters of 10-15 villages.

# Aavas-Usha Silai School: Basic Features

- ✓ Two seven-day residential training programs on sewing and stitching.
- ✓ First batch in Phagi-Renwal (Jaipur district): 8<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> Oct 2020;  
Second batch in Chaksu (Jaipur district): 15<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct 2020
- ✓ In each batch, training was provided to 25 women. Thus, in total, 50 women were trained.
- ✓ These fifty motivated women were chosen by Usha and Unnayan from among the most vulnerable communities in Rajasthan. Unnayan workers personally tracked and visited the homes of each of these 25 women to convince them and their families to join this program.
- ✓ The initial two days were allocated to training on assembly, repair and maintenance of sewing machines and the remaining five days would cover various aspects of garment construction for e.g. basics of sewing and stitching tools, basics of embroidery, measurement techniques, fabric requirement calculations etc.

# Aavas-Usha Silai School: At the end of Seven Days

Women successfully completing their training have been certified and provided with one sewing machine, a rack, a stool, a course booklet in vernacular, service recall manual, sample file, register and signage for setting up their own Usha Aavas Silai Schools.

They have been made to sign an MOU with Usha whereby the sewing machines are being provided to them only on the condition that they would use it to train 20 other women in their village and to set up their own silai-cum-repair outlet. If any of them fails to meet this conditionality within a period of one year, the machine would be taken away from them and given to new women joining the program.

Thus, the 50 women trained by us will become Local Resource Persons in their respective villages. Usha personnel will constantly be in contact with these women to help them through their journey of becoming entrepreneurs. Aavas would receive a quarterly report from Usha about the progress of these 50 women and the breadth of their outreach.

# Aavas-Usha Silai School: Values & Legacy

- ✓ Providing a safe and secure environment for women learning silai with access to basic facilities like hygienic food, restrooms, beds, silai machines at a distance of 1 meter.
- ✓ Providing competent trainers who can act as not just teachers, but mentors, designed to make learning time-bound, individualized but fun at the same time.
- ✓ Apart from technical learning, the program is also designed to motivate women to become financially self-reliant, by guiding them on time-management and balancing of household responsibilities and also, by sharing success stories of other Usha Silai Schools.

*The idea is to build faith in Aavas, Usha, Unnayan and the silai school model. These women will become brand ambassadors of Aavas in their respective villages.*



# Targets and Budget of the Silai School Model

- Estimated cost is Rs 40,000 to Usha for training 50 women. This cost is inclusive of the food, bedding, machines, certificates and lodging provided during
- If this program gets approval, we plan to train at least 50 more women in and around Jaipur District. These 50 will in turn train 20 women in their respective villages.
- We also plan to replicate this model in Gujarat by training three hundred women in the state.
- After training a total of 400 women by the end of next financial year across India, we would touch approximately 8,000 lives.

# Strengths of the Silai School Model

- Uniqueness: “never heard of” opportunity for rural women
- Replicability in other states/districts
- Cost effective
- Multiplier effect
- Brand Value: one woman will promote Aavas in one Village
- Dynamic & Flexible: we can integrate financial literacy or mobile app training with the Silai school learning; we could gradually add other skill development programs outside of “sewing & stitching”
- In-built monitoring mechanism



**LAUNCH  
OF GRAM  
SIDDHI**



We already have stories....!!



Sumitra Ladni is a highly motivated and strong women. When her sister died leaving behind two children, she took the bold decision to marry into her sister's family. Leaving behind her MA degree, she sacrificed a lot to build a good future for her sister's children. She does a lot of silai at home and even runs a small production center. She was one of the best silai students in our batch of 25 women.

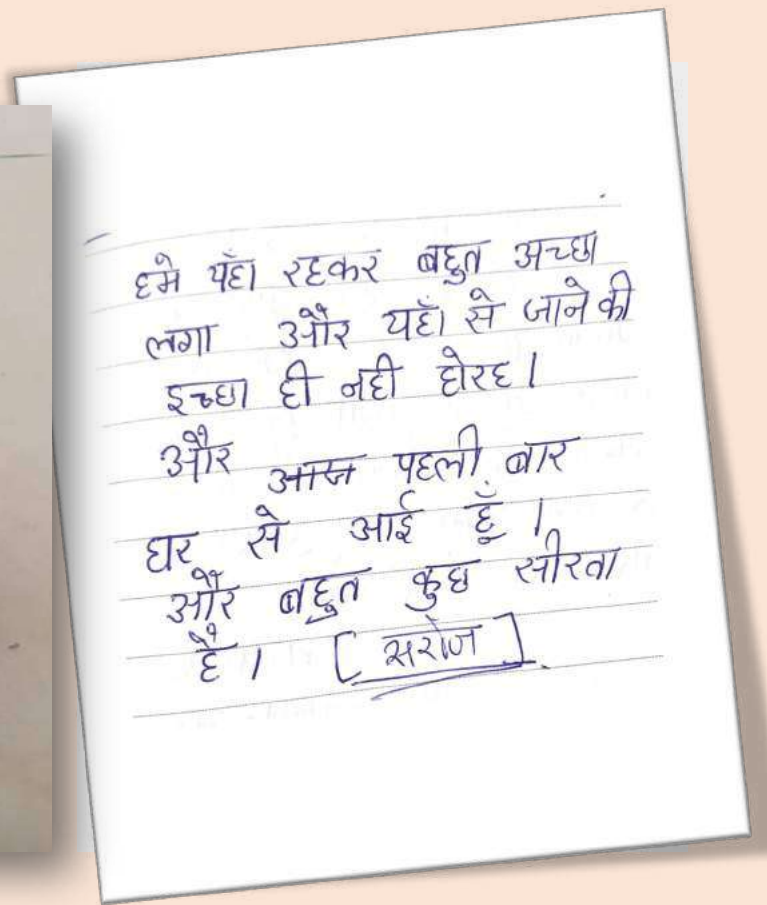


Sumitra Ladni हमारी ट्रेनिंग सात दिन की रही उषा, आवश उन्नयन को बहुत ध्यानवाद देना चाहती है की हमें अपने बचने का मोका मिला और हमें स्थयहा बहुत अच्छा लगा बहुत कुछ सिखने को मिला मैं के चाहते हैं कि अपने भी हमारा इसी तरह से मदद करे

ध्यानवाद

उषा उन्नयन आवश

उन्नयन



For Saroj, it was the first time away from home and she thoroughly enjoyed it. For Ramadevi, a widow with only two daughters, Silai schools became a ray of hope. Until now she has supported herself through manual labor but now she wishes to open her own silai school and lead a dignified life.





Vimala's journey to the silai school was not easy. She and her husband, both are specially-abled. With two children and old parents to look after, they both have to work really hard. Vimala does some stitching and sewing for people living in her locality, but she does not have her own silai machine. Her elder son was happy about the opportunity provided by silai school and even volunteered to do household duties for seven days while his mother was away.

At Silai School, Vimala not only obtained a brand new silai machine and training, but also received immense appreciation and motivation for her excellent silai skills. She was one of the best in her batch of 25.

## *Kudos to Laxmi...!*



This is Laxmi. She lives in a joint family with two children. She manages household duties alongside manual labour to support her family. Her son is five years of age and her daughter is just nine-months old. Leaving a nine-month old baby girl at home is not easy, especially when the baby is suffering from a serious medical condition. Previously, she had lost a baby girl because of the same disease. But brave Laxmi took out time to participate in our silai school program.

On the last day of training, her daughter had to be urgently rushed to hospital and Laxmi had to leave for a few hours. Soon she returned, enthusiastically finished her last silai assignment and participated in the valedictory ceremony.

She dreams of having her son admitted to a prestigious English medium school...!



यासमिन

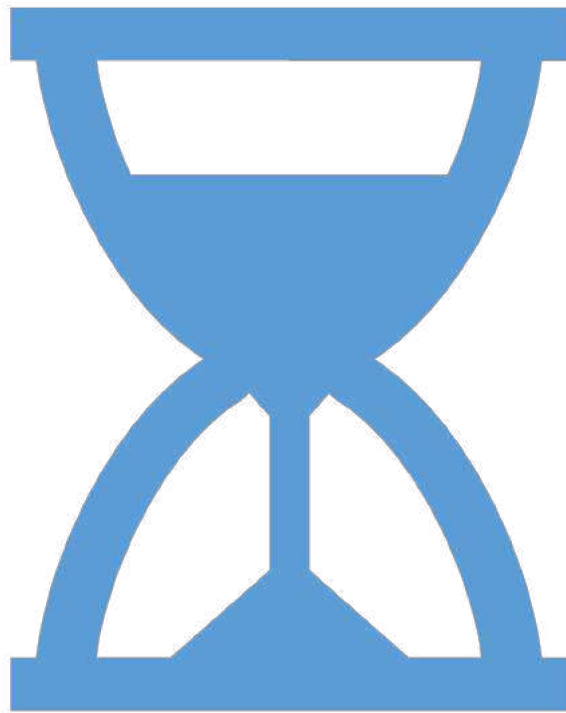
यह मेरी लाइफ का 15 दिनों का  
 मैं अभी घर से बाहर नहीं रही  
 मुझे यहां रहकर बहुत कुछ  
 सिखने का मिला और मैं यह  
 चाहती हूँ कि इसी तरह हमें आगे  
 भी और कुछ सिखने का मौका  
 मिले और हमें ट्रेनिंग दी जाए  
 यहां पर सब, मैडम ने हमारे  
 साथ बहुत अच्छा व्यवहार  
 किया और हमें यहां पूरी व्यवस्था  
 एवं सुविधा मिली यहां रहकर हमें  
 बहुत कुछ सिखने का मिला  
 मैं चाहती हूँ कि जीवन में हमें  
 आगे बढ़ने के लिए और भी कई मौके

Yasmin belongs to the Muslim community, a marginalized segment of rural India. She has two children, looked after by her husband during her seven-day training. During initial days of training, when we interviewed her, she looked nervous and spoke little. However, on the very last day, she looked elated and extremely excited. She did not want to go back. She came up to us and volunteered to write a thank you note to Aavas. There was light in her eyes and smile on her face...!

Another Muslim girl in the batch, named Rukaiah, was confident and motivated from the very first day. She had done MA and already knew some silai. Her in-laws were very supportive towards her career, she told us proudly.



# One month later....



*We already started to see positive change in the lives of our Silai School women.*





*All fifty women trained have opened up their own Silai School in their villages!*

*50 Aavas-Usha Silai  
Schools have opened up  
in 50 Indian  
villages!!!!!!!!!!!!!!*



*From being students again to becoming teachers, our Silai School women have grown and prospered. . . .! They now earn about Rs 4,500- 5000 per month by teaching and stitching.*



A highly educated, empowered and confident Muslim woman, with eyes full of dreams and who is always smiling. After returning to her home, she has opened up her own Silai School in her village.

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**Rukiah**

# Our Role Now

- Each woman trained by us has become a Local Resource Person in her respective village.
- We make sure to regularly touch base with the women trained by us, in order to assist and aid them in whichever way we can, in setting up their own training center and production unit. Usha, Aavas and the 50 women are also linked together on a WhatsApp group for convenient and constant contact.
- We have recently placed an order for 300 masks from these Silai School women and are thus providing them market linkage. The women making these masks will be remunerated and the masks will be used for CSR initiatives of Aavas Foundation.

# Addressing Sustainable Development Goals



Training imparted benefits women to have an alternate source of livelihood which helps them break the shackles of poverty.

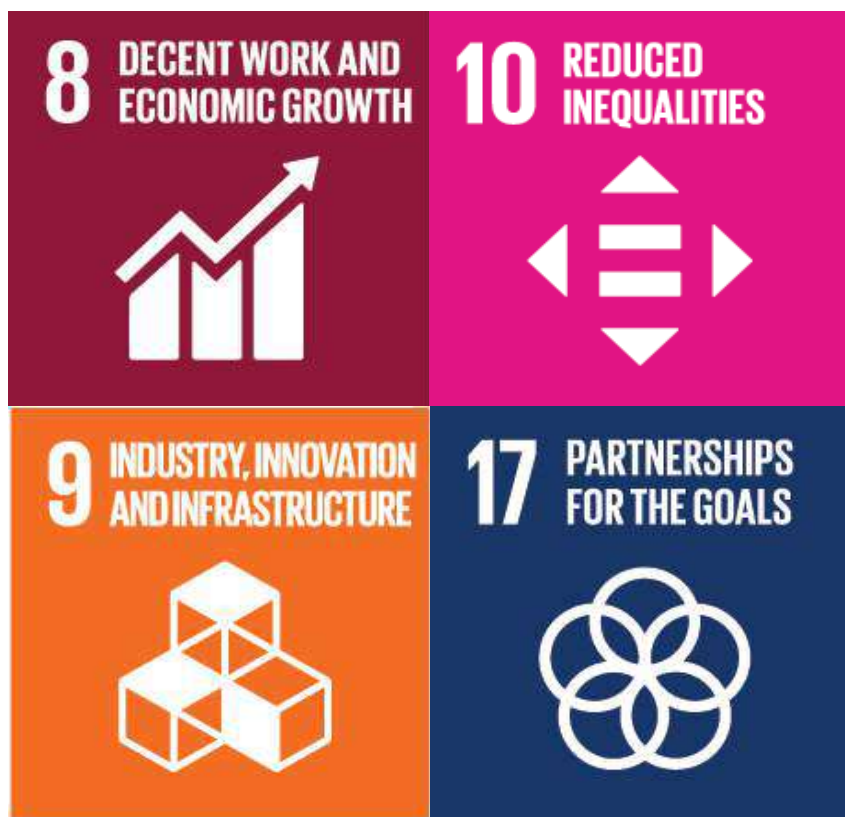


The regular income earned by women is invested in consumption of nutritious food for herself and family members.



Women earnings from sewing skills are in par or more than their male counterpart. They are socially being accepted and recognized due to their acquired sewing skills.

# Other SDGs Touched



# Summing Up...

200 Women  
Trained

50 Families  
Touched

50 Villages  
Reached

7  
Sustainable  
Development  
Goals  
Achieved



# Thank You

