



EGG'S Impact in Uttarakhand

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Barbara Herz

A STUNNING CHANCE: GOVERNMENT ASKS EGG TO EXPAND FROM 50 TO ALL 1106 SCHOOLS IN UTTARAKHAND'S USN DISTRICT

Summary

The Government of Uttarakhand's USN District has asked EGG to expand immediately from 50 secondary schools reaching 25,000 students to all 1106 primary, middle, and secondary schools in USN, reaching 330,000. Government will give teacher time and in kind, helping EGG cut its already low annual cost per student of \$5. To help expand so fast, EGG will enlist recent graduates from secondary schools with EGG's program, paying them \$250 per year so they can attend local college and run EGG programs part-time. This initiative enables young women from traditional communities to reach college and start modern jobs, becoming role models. It also helps EGG expand cost-effectively because these women know EGG's program -- a double win.

Government has made its extraordinary request of EGG because EGG's model – mobilizing communities, strengthening School Management Committees, and empowering girls through innovative Girls' Parliaments – has achieved stunning results. USN is one of India's poorer Districts, with a patriarchal culture where traditionally girls have little choice in life. But EGG offers girls real empowerment -- a chance to work for their own education, in ways that build support in their communities, in their families, and among their teachers. Most obviously EGG's small expenditure helps Government's far larger investment in education work. More girls come to school, and learning improves dramatically -- crucial in India, as in many countries, as enrollments are climbing but learning remains weak. In 2017 in EGG program schools, 94 percent of students taking national 12th grade exams passed, compared to roughly two-thirds in non-EGG schools. Performance improved in math and science as well as in reading and writing.

Engaging girls through EGG's pioneering Girls' Parliaments is the key. Girls' Parliaments advocate publicly for girls' education. They work with teachers to improve learning. They help SMCs and police improve safety. They run a handwashing program that has gone District-wide. They oppose child marriage. Crucially, it was Girls' Parliaments who inspired the Government. After attending a recent Girls' Parliament Conference, USN's District's senior official, its District Magistrate, announced the next day that EGG would start in all USN's schools.

Organizationally, EGG works with an Indian NGO, the EGG Foundation (EGGF), to implement and help fund its program, building on its experience in Rajasthan with its earlier spin-off, now

operating independently as Educate Girls (EG). EGG is ready to expand. It just needs your help to fund its modest cost that drives the system to work.

EGG's PROGRAM IN USN DISTRICT IN UTTARAKHAND

India has launched a huge drive to boost enrollment and learning in secondary schools. Enrollment is up, but many girls still drop out and marry early. Moreover, girls who enroll cannot always attend regularly. Learning remains weak for both boys and girls and has been hard to improve. In national tests in secondary schools, the government has been shocked by low academic performance. Moreover, several Indian states participated in recent international learning tests (TIMSS and PISA) and scored near the bottom compared to other countries and regions. *In India's drive for education, improving learning in secondary school is now critical. But most efforts to progress in education have focused on elementary school as step one. The need for progress in secondary schools now is acute if India is to reap the benefits of education -- relieving poverty, developing a stronger middle class, improving health, reducing violence, slowing population growth and so easing environmental stress, and fostering a fairer and more inclusive society where women and men have real voice and choice.*

In 2013, EGG moved to Uttarakhand to see if its model could work for girls in secondary school. EGG now operates its program in the Udhamsingh Nagar (USN) District in the State of Uttarakhand in India. *At a cost of about \$5 per student per year, EGG provides trained staff who regularly visit schools and offer training to SMCs and to girls, thus helping government's vast investment in schools pay off better.* EGG's program started in 2013 and has run for four years in 50 schools reaching over 25,000 students. Some 70 percent are girls, as parents often send boys to stronger private schools when they can.

A 2017 evaluation shows EGG helps girls stay in secondary school and *learn, by mobilizing communities and girls themselves to help schools work. EGG's basic model is key:*

- *Offering Girls' Parliaments leadership training to build girls' self-esteem and confidence in dealing with peers, families, School Management Committees and local authorities;*
- *Strengthening School Management Committees through training to advocate for girls' schooling; foster stronger ties among SMCs, teachers, and students; and improve schools' facilities and learning environment;*
- *Engaging local communities through meetings to build social support for girls and weaken socio-cultural barriers to girls' schooling, thereby promoting access, achievement and gender parity in education.*
- *Using leverage so EGG's low-cost program helps the whole school system work.*
- *Evaluating the program carefully.*

In Uttarakhand, Girls' Parliaments have emerged as the linchpin of the whole model. Other organizations in India help build community support or strengthen SMCs. But that is not enough. EGG's innovative Girls' Parliaments make the whole model work. They enable girls from traditional communities to mobilize for their own education. Girls'

Parliaments are transformative.

HIGHLIGHTS OF EGG PROGRAM IMPACT IN USN DISTRICT

EGG designed its program to enable rigorous evaluation. It selected 50 schools randomly for the EGG program and 50 for non-EGG “control” schools from the same District. The results presented here are highlights of a comparative analysis of the EGG and non-EGG schools.

In some ways EGG program schools and nonEGG schools are all progressing. Over half the children now have a school nearby, within one kilometer. Though attendance data are soft, over half the children reportedly attend school at least 20 days a month. Physical infrastructure is also gradually improving — children and staff complain of lack of space and furniture, but schools have boundary walls, at least some basic sanitation, and electricity.

So what's different about EGG program schools?

In 2017 94 percent of students taking national 12th grade exams passed, compared with roughly two-thirds in non-EGG schools. In 2013 only about 60 percent of students in EGG or non-EGG schools passed. EGG schools were the ones who progressed.

Learning gains don't come easily, and they matter. The economic and social barriers girls face in school and in the community are far more restricting than even data suggest. Almost 60 percent of girls in EGG program schools and control schools cite exam failure as a key reason for dropping out. Not surprisingly, some 80 percent in EGG and non-EGG schools also cite poverty, and roughly half cite child marriage. Substantial numbers also cite the burden of chores and genuine safety concerns.

Why are girls in EGG program schools learning more?

1. Teachers at EGG program schools engage far more with students.

- 58 percent of girls in EGG program schools got extra help from teachers versus 32 percent in nonEGG control schools.
- 95 percent of girls in EGG program schools said teachers help them “apart from teaching” with interests like writing and debating, versus 72 percent in nonEGG control schools.
- All girls in EGG program schools said their teachers often use creative teaching aids; 20 percent of girls in nonEGG control schools say their teachers never do.
- 44 percent of girls in EGG program schools said they use computers versus 25 percent in nonEGG control schools.

2. EGG program schools are more sensitive to girls' needs now.

Insensitivity to gender issues, ranging from stereotyped expectations to safety concerns to practical physical problems, limits girls' participation in education. EGG program schools take more effective steps to address girls' needs.

- EGG program schools had 757 approved teaching posts compared with 538 in nonEGG control schools – and 36 percent versus 17 percent are women. Moreover, EGG program schools actually hired more teachers, especially for science.
- EGG program schools did more to help girls manage their periods. Some 78 percent of EGG program schools have trash cans in toilets versus 69 percent of nonEGG control schools. In EGG program schools, 60 percent of girls now attend school during their periods versus 54 percent of girls from control schools -- a start.

3. School Management Committees in EGG program schools do far more to support schools, teachers, and girls themselves.

- All SMC in EGG program schools are elected, rather than appointed, versus 34 percent in nonEGG control schools. Community ties and accountability are thus stronger.
- All SMCs in EGG program schools prepared "Whole School Development Plans" versus about 60 percent in nonEGG control schools.
- SMCs in EGG program schools completed 640 plans – 96% of those prepared. SMCs in nonEGG control schools completed 118 action plans, about five times less, and only 61 percent of those originally prepared.
- SMCs in EGG program schools held more planning meetings – 708 versus 214.
- Some 72 percent of SMCs in EGG program schools had members who attended Government training versus 62% in nonEGG control schools.
- SMCs in EGG program schools raised \$63,965 in cash contributions versus \$41,637 in nonEGG control schools. EGG program schools SMCs also gave almost twice that much in kind, versus nothing in nonEGG control schools.

4. EGG program schools now have more computers, science facilities, and books.

- EGG program schools have 320 computers versus 167 in control schools.
- Over one-fourth of EGG program schools have physics and chemistry labs versus 8 percent of nonEGG control schools.
- EGG program schools have 28,722 library books versus 17,332 in nonEGG control schools.
- EGG schools, far more students are allowed to take books out, and more actually use school computers.

5. Girls' Parliaments prepare girls to lead – EGG's most important innovation where traditionally girls rarely speak out or stand up for themselves.

- Girls in all EGG program schools met actively. Girls elected 8-9 ministers on average in their parliaments, for sports, safety and discipline, health, maintenance, SMC, science, culture, and environment. They identified needs and priorities and got to work.
- GP's engaged in schools and community – 74 percent in girls' safety, 70 percent in social/cultural/sports, 89 percent in school cleanliness, 38 percent in sanitation, 24 percent in teaching, 18 percent in book banks, 36 percent in study groups, and 51 percent with SMCs.
- Girls report enormous gains in confidence, skills, and commitment, and self-esteem — in their society, hard to quantify but readily visible change.

Stories of Change from EGG Schools

- Most SMCs in EGG school now work on projects with girls.
- At girls' urging, a third of SMCs in EGG schools work with police to improve girls' safety.
- After attending a Girls' Parliament, one girl from an EGG school returned to her village and persuaded a couple not to marry off their six-year old daughter. The village now helps persuade other villages to avoid child marriage.
- One girl from the “untouchable” caste graduated from an EGG program school and now works for EGG.
- Another girl who persistently begged EGG’s Executive Director to help her stay in school got a Ford fellowship enabling her to get a bachelor’s degree in England and plans to start her PhD in gender and development in Canada.
- The mother of one girl active in Girls’ Parliament now urges other parents in the community to let their girls go to school.

CONCLUSION

EGG'S experience in Uttarakhand offers a model for transforming secondary schools and enabling girls to learn and lead. It deserves to be expanded as Government has requested. EGG's own program costs are minimal. Government itself contributes substantially. If EGG can raise the minimal resources to cover its cost, it can inspire change that transforms girls' lives far beyond Uttarakhand -- it can reach globally.