

1. Organic Farming for Widows of Suicide Farmers, Yavatmal, Maharashtra

- Yavatmal district is in Vidharbha region of Maharashtra. Situated south of Nagpur and bordering Andhra Pradesh, the region is in a low rainfall zone with precipitation averaging about 40 inches a year.
- Farming is the primary source of livelihood. Majority of farmers in Yavatmal are small and marginal farmers. Increased use of chemical fertilisers/pesticides for commercial crops like cotton along with droughts year after year are the cause of farm indebtedness and suicides.
- Since early 2000, crop failures due to droughts have trapped farmers in many states including Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Punjab into indebtedness and suicides. Yavatmal district has been a hotspot for farmer suicides in India.
- WRG in collaboration with Asia Initiative, New York and on-ground partner Dindayal Bahuuddeshiya Prasarak Mandal (DBPM) provide technical and social support for women suffering from farmer suicides in 150 villages in Yavatmal.
- This project is unique in the sense that women attend meetings to learn organic farming methods, to make herbal fertilizers/pesticides, to develop financial literacy and to plant trees. In return, they earn non-cash awards, called “social capital credits (SoCC)”.
- Women then improve their lives by redeeming their non-cash credits for borrowing bicycles, acquiring sanitary pads, and by visiting sample farm demonstrations on growing indigenous crops.
- Organic Farming puts extra money directly in **women’s pockets** and agricultural knowledge in their hands. As a result, they gain security for themselves and their families against drought and new power in their own households.



2. The Skill Development Center for Migrant workers, Jodhpur, Rajasthan

- Jodhpur district is in Thar desert of Western Rajasthan, close to Pakistan border. Aanganwa colony is about 15 miles out of Jodhpur city. Due to limited job opportunities, adults work as day laborers either on farms or in garment factories.
- The Skill Development Center was inaugurated in a temporary shack in October 2019 with United Just Action Society (UJAS) as on-ground partners in Aanganwa colony.
- Roughly 160 migrant families reside in this colony. They all live in temporary structures on the land given by the Government of India. The colony has no basic amenities like running water, electricity, sanitation, paved roads or schools.
- The Skill Development Center's aim is to help women artisans revive their traditional skills in embroidery and applique crafts, and teach them modern techniques to adapt their craft to current market trends in color schemes and designs.
- A designer and a master trainer have been employed for applique, patch work and embroidery. The program consists of three phases — Phase 1: classroom for 10 days, Phase 2: Post classroom for 2 months to make sample handicrafts under supervision, Phase 3: classroom for 2 days for product review, and next 8 months to complete assignments (make handicrafts for sale) with supervision and marketing support.
- The trainees are asked to make traditional handicraft products like cushions, tablecloths, bedspreads, pillowcases, floor mats, sun hats for women, caps for men, bags, purses and the like.
- UJAS assists to showcase their handicrafts at hotels, fairs, exhibitions and use personal contacts to promote products made by the trainees.
- So far, two sessions have been held, training 60 women in embroidery and 60 in applique work, however, Covid-19 lockdown caused training to stop in mid-stream. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, trainees have been sewing masks for sale.



3.Sister Nivedita School on Wheels, Rajkot, Gujrat

- Rajkot district is in the Western part of Gujrat. Sister Nivedita School on wheels (SNSOW) is headquartered in the city of Rajkot. SNSOW is working with 91 rural schools, 20,000 students and 660 teachers, in and around Rajkot district.
- Sister Nivedita Foundation started the SNSOW program in 1994. The School has two mobile buses which take teachers and education materials to these 91 rural schools.
- In 2019, WRG decided to support SNSOW to encourage girls to continue their education beyond middle school by awarding 10 scholarships to girls who had been promoted to 9th grade. This support ensured their continuing education.
- SNSOW aims to empower rural schools & educate marginalized/underprivileged children.
- Rural schools can be empowered only if they have access to better trained teachers, libraries, laboratories, computers, sports, educational field trips, arts, music, theater and an inclusive approach towards girl child. SNSOW is attempting to meet this need in rural areas of Rajkot and surrounding districts.
- Committee member, Geeta Fozdar visited SNSOW in February 2020 and she reports that the school has dancing, sewing, music, computer, job placement and other vocational education classes. They have an auditorium where they host various speakers. They record their speeches and keep them in the library, so others can benefit from them.
- Geeta recommends that we should increase our support for rural girls.



4. Empowering Rural Girl Child: Sant Iswher Singh Memorial Public High School, Habispur Bigas, Hapur, Uttar Pradesh (UP)

- Uttar Pradesh is located north east of Delhi. It is one of the poorest, rural and conservative states where patriarchy dominates social norms.
- Sant Iswher Singh Memorial Public School (SISMS) was founded by Bibi Santosh Kaur in 2002 with 30 girls & 5 teachers to promote Girl child development & empowerment. The School is located in Habispur village, about 5 miles from the small town of Hapur and 55 miles north east of Delhi.
- It's a full-fledged government recognized high school with classes from 1 to 12 class. Currently, 26 teachers instruct **635** students, giving student -teacher ratio of 24/1 .
- The School is primarily funded by private donations through a trust. It charges a token fee of Rs. 150/month. Almost half the students are too poor to pay even this token fee and about 13% of girls are orphans who either live with their relatives or in Gurudwara.
- The School offers holistic, secular, value-based education with focus on academic and vocational training.
- WRG support has enabled the school to set up a brand new computer lab with 8 computers, replace worn out water coolers, install solar panels, ceiling fans and desk & benches for all class rooms. In addition, WRG support has helped to recruit 3 additional teachers for English, Math & Science for higher classes.
- Poonam Batra visited the school on February 28, 2020. She was very pleased with the progress that the school has made in one year. She found teachers to be hard working, compassionate & dedicated.
- The School needs your help to set up chemistry & physics laboratories, library and equipment for physical education. Funds are also needed for teachers' salaries. Management is hoping that your supporting hand will remain with them in their journey to enlighten the lives of future citizens.



5. Khamagarchi Tribal School & Vocational Training

Khamagarchi, Kolkata, West Bengal

- Khamagarchi village is north of Kolkata, about a two hour drive. It is home to a tribal community whose members speak a language known as Santali. Most of the residents are illiterate and poor who live in mud huts, without running water and electricity.
- Empower the Children Foundation, founded by Rosalie Giffonello, a retired teacher from Jackson, New Jersey found that children from Khamagarchi families were not going to local free government school. WRG's partnership started with the foundation in 2018.
- One reason for parents not sending their children to Bengali medium schools was their inability to help/guide children with homework etc. due to language barrier and illiteracy.
- Rosalie opened a non-formal school in 2009 with 45 children and two teachers. She started with teaching Santali culture, dances and music on weekends and subsequently started classes in Bengali, English and math with instruction in Santali.
- Children receive free education, school supplies and lunch.
- As Khamagarchi children started enrolling in formal schools, remedial classes in science, history, social sciences etc. were also added for mainstream children.
- In 2019, 56 students were enrolled in the non-formal school and 20 students were enrolled in remedial/coaching classes. Students are also coached in skills and tools to take entrance exam for college admission.
- To empower women of the village, a year long vocational training in tailoring and sewing is available and a year long pre-vocational training is offered to older girls.
- In 2019, 40 girls were enrolled in pre-vocational and 28 in vocational training pro-



6. Schooling for Children of Slums

6.1 Sannidhi Primary School, Najafgarh, Delhi

- Sannidhi Primary School, Najafgarh is located on the outskirts of metropolitan capital city of Delhi.
- The School was inaugurated in August 2016 with 40 children. For academic year 2019/20, over 169 children enrolled but only 141 attended school for the year. A Third grade was added last year, and a fourth grade will be added once the Covid-19 lockdown is lifted.
- In addition to traditional academic subjects, children are exposed to music, conversational English, environmental science and moral science. They are also taken on field trips.
- The School charges a nominal fee of Rs. 100 per month to give parents a stake in their children's education. Monthly parent-teacher meetings are held on a regular basis.
- ***All children receive free education, free books, stationary, summer & winter uniforms, shoes & socks, a glass of milk on arrival, and a nutritious mid-day meal.***
- By first grade, most children can read and write in Hindi, have simple conversation in English and do simple math—addition, subtraction and multiplication.
- Teachers have found digital tools like tablets as an effective teaching tool, in particular for PreK and KG children.
- During the lockdown, regular final exams could not be held. Teachers used pictorial and voice messages on WhatsApp to assign homework from exercise books. When schools re-open, home work would be used to evaluate performance of first, second and third grade students.



6.2 Sannidhi Primary School, Jaipur, Rajasthan*

- Success of Sannidhi Primary School in Najafgarh, encouraged WRG to start a second primary school in Jaipur. The Guild of Service is our local partner in providing low cost, value based, secular education.
- Sannidhi Primary School, Jaipur was inaugurated in July 2018 in a rented building in Jagatpura slum, near Jaipur airport.
- Sannidhi started with 44 children and in 2019 enrollment rose to 77. Children range in age from 3 to 7+ years. Last year, the School added the first grade. A second grade will be added once the Covid-19 lockdown is over.
- Parents of most children enrolled in the school are illiterate who earn their living as rag pickers, construction workers, housemaids and the like. .
- Last year, an activity room was added with a TV used for streaming educational and arts/craft programs, including dance and music.
- To encourage parental involvement, parent-teacher meetings are held every month.
- School held vaccination camp and celebrated important days like the Independence day, Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, Diwali, Christmas, New year, and the Republic Day.
- ***All children receive free education, free books, stationary, summer & winter uniforms, shoes & socks, a glass of milk on arrival, and a nutritious mid-day meal.***
- Poonam Batra visited the school on Feb 21, 2020. She interacted with students, teachers and reviewed various activities. After the visit, WRG supporter, Sanjeev Ahuja said that he salutes Batina and Dhruv Yadav for their dedication to children and vision for the school.



6.3 Swapna Sarthak School, Gurgaon, Haryana**

- Swapna Sarthak School is located in Gurgaon, Haryana, bordering the capital city Delhi.
- The School is for children from marginalized underprivileged families. It especially reaches out to girl child to promote their empowerment through education.
- Gunjan foundation's founder Sushma Singhvi is a believer in what the first President of India, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan used to say, "Padhega India, tabhi to badhega India."
- The School was started in 2010 with 60 students and today, it has 210 students, with classes ranging from Kindergarten to fifth grade. Each class has no more than 30 students.
- ***All children receive free education, free books, stationary, summer & winter uniforms, shoes & socks, a glass of milk on arrival, and a nutritious mid-day meal.***
- Swapna Sarthak is an English medium school that offers all around comprehensive and holistic education that includes classes in computers, conversational English, music & martial arts. Students have won trophies in Taekwondo and other athletic competitions, and awards in poetry reciting and Kathak dancing.
- Invited speakers, puppet and other mediums are relied upon to raise awareness of issues like personal hygiene, puberty, good manners, environment and civic responsibility.
- **Sushma Kumar** visited the School in December 2019. She visited several classes and interacted with teachers and the founder, Sushma Singhvi. In her words, "sitting in the classrooms with children grades KG-6th made me realize that early interventions, like the ones offered through this school would not only help children meet developmental milestones but also provide them with protective factors and give them a chance to create lasting changes in their lives."



6.4 Pratham Shiksha School, Devi Nagar, Jaipur, Rajasthan

- Pratham (first) Shiksha (education) School was started by Pratham Shiksha Charitable Organization in 2005 for underprivileged children in Devi Nagar, Jaipur.
- It is a primary school, upto 5th grade. In 2019, 320 students were enrolled.
- Instruction in academic subjects and computer literacy is supplemented by workshops in handwriting, dictation, general knowledge and public speaking.
- The school also organizes extra-curricular activities like science exhibition, arts and craft, Diwali celebration, painting, annual function, mehendi competition.
- The School also hires their own graduates as teachers, to serve as role models for students.
- Chandra Bagaria, a long time WRG supporter, visited the school in May 2019.
- Poonam Batra visited the school in February 2020. She visited several classes, interacted with teachers and the founder Sumeeti Mittal.



7. Community Development Through Skill Development Training

7.1 Skill Development Center, Rangpuri Pahari, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi

- *Skill Development Training Center* is in Rangpuri Pahari, a slum in south Delhi, west of the affluent community of Vasant Kunj. Rangpuri Pahari and surrounding slums are inhabited by diverse, underprivileged, uneducated, and poor working families.
- PHD Family Welfare Association as the local on the ground partner for vocational training programs since their mission is consistent with WRG's mission.
- The center charges no fees for training and materials.
- The Skill Development Training Center was inaugurated in March 2018. It offered two training courses of six-months duration- Computer Education, Tailoring & Embroidery.
- In October 2018, with help of local funding, three new courses — Beauty Culture and Nurse's Assistant and coaching in English were added at the center.
- Within the last two years, over 200 men and women have completed their training in either tailoring or computer education. To earn certificate, trainees have to pass theoretical and practical tests at the end of training.
- Committee member, Sushma Kumar visited the center in December 2019. She is very complementary of beautiful bags and formal purses made by trainees for sale and found her visit, " a gratifying experience. Adolescents/ adults scouted by advertising around the neighborhoods via flyers as well as word of mouth were being trained with real-life examples and equipment."



7.2 Sannidhi Vocational Training Institute, Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan

- Sawai Madhopur is one of the most backward districts in Rajasthan. It is about one and one-half hours drive from Jaipur.
- In partnership with Guild of Service in Delhi, a three month long course in “Beauty and Wellness” was started for young women from disadvantaged backgrounds in August of 2017.
- Students are trained by instructors from “Kaya Kalp”, a well established chain of beauty parlors in Rajasthan. Students receive intensive training with all day classes for four days a week.
- Curriculum incorporates theory and practice in body, hair and skin care as well as yoga and nutrition, giving participants an holistic view of “beauty”.
- Training is free of charge and all the materials are also provided. Scholarships including transportation, given to given encourage women from disadvantaged communities to enroll in the training program.
- So far, three batches of women, totaling 33, have completed basic beauty & wellness training. An additional 9 students have completed a one-month long advanced course with emphasis on hair and skin care.
- All trainees are either working on their own or are gainfully employed at local beauty salons.

7.3 Sannidhi Vocational Training Institute, Vrindhavan, Uttar Pradesh

- Sannidhi Vocational Training Institute is functioning successfully in Vrindavan, also known as the “City of Widows” and “Temples”. The city is a big tourist attraction for devotees of Lord Krishna.
- Abandoned widows are sheltered in the home called **Ma Dham**, which is run by Guild of Service in Vrindavan.
- Widows and single young women from Ma Dham and five neighboring villages are encouraged to enroll in the Sannidhi Vocational Training Institute.
- All courses offered at Ma Dham have durations ranging from 4 to 6 months.
- Course offerings are: Temple economy, Geriatric nursing, Beauty Culture, Computer Literacy, Garment Production and Pickel Making
- A new course revolving around the commercial side of temples is appropriately entitled “**Temple Economy**”. This course is of three month duration. Since June 2018, 40 trainees have been trained to make clothes and accessories for various deities, incenses, wicks, Tulsi malas and disposable containers.
- Since trainees are either widows from Ma Dham or destitute girls and women from neighboring villages, the Institute is also providing assistance in finding buyers for their products.
- Over 65 Ma Dham widows, disadvantaged women and young men from neighboring villages benefitted from training in 2019. Garment Production group made masks for free distribution to local vendors and workers.



7.4: Dayanand Silai Kendra (Dayanand Sewing Center), Noida, Uttar Pradesh

- Noida in Uttar Pradesh is east of the capital city of Delhi. The Sewing Center is run by Arya Samaj of Arun Vihar, Noida.
- Silai Kendra was started in May 2007 by retired military personnel.
- The Center teaches tailoring, sewing and embroidery to women from low income families. Most of these women are either illiterate or have low education level. They either stay home or work as domestic help in neighboring affluent families.
- Classes are held for five days a week for 4 hours each day. The Center has simple 10 hand and 10 foot sewing machines and seven machines for more complex jobs like hemming and embroidery etc. Few good students were sent to Agra at USHA International Training school for specialized training this past year.
- The Center offers a six month course, at the end of which students take an exam. Successful trainees are awarded diplomas certified by Usha International, a leading manufacturer of sewing machines in India.
- Every successful student is given a sewing machine. So far, 20 students are enrolled and expect enrollment to go up after the lockdown is lifted.
- A Diwali Mela is held in Arun Vihar club where a number of industries exhibit their products. For past two years students have been able to sell their merchandise at the mela with great success.



8. Tribal Schools Go From Lighting to Digital

- Male Mahadeshwara Hills (MM Hills) area, consisting of 77 hills and forests, is approximately 120 miles south of Bengaluru, Karnataka bordering Tamilnadu.
- The area is largely inaccessible by roads/railways. The tribal population living there is mostly illiterate and poor without basic amenities like electricity and safe drinking water.
- State government has opened one to two room primary or middle schools in villages. Some of these schools are so remote that students have to walk through forested trails for a mile or more to get to them.
- Eleven years ago, WRG started a partnership with Help Educate a Child Foundation to help improve schools. In the first year, a grant was given for uniforms, socks and shoes for students. By 2019, 27 schools are being helped with the support of local partner, Help Educate a Child.
- Most schools with no electricity, now have solar panels and charging stations. Each student gets a solar lamp to take home but has to come to school to charge it. Solar pumps have been installed to pump well water.
- Students in all schools get free school supplies and uniforms including shoes and socks; they also receive free annual physical and dental checkups.
- Eleven schools have an additional teacher's aide each. Many schools have small libraries, some sports equipment and annual health camps.
- Dodona and Gorsane Schools opened computer centers with the help of local support. WRG funding helped to open computer center in Alambadi School. Alambadi is the last village in Karnataka, bordering Tamilnadu. The village does not have electric-



9. Helping Our Homeland USA

WRG scholarship program for women pursuing higher education and/or vocational training in New Jersey supports 15 students each year. Each scholarship is for \$1,000 a year. The scholarship application process consists of a formal application, a 500-word essay, school transcripts, and evidence of financial need. Scholarship committee chaired by Kusum Ketkar evaluates each application for need and academic performance. All recipients are expected to maintain GPA of 3.0.

9.1 New Jersey City University, Jersey City (NJCU)

- New Jersey City University is located in Jersey City, Hudson County. The City is home to a diverse population dominated by Hispanic and African American communities.
- NJCU is an urban, commuter, minority serving public university.
- The University has special program STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) for exceptional undergraduates.
- Our Executive Committee voted to increase the number of scholarships from two to five.
- This February, Poonam and Kusum visited NJCU campus, took a tour of its facilities, and met with the president and other senior staff at lunch.
- Scholarship recipients are:



Left-Right: Aszmi, Farooq, Ketkar, Kaur & Batra

9.2: Hudson County Community College, Jersey City

- Hudson County College located in Jersey City, has a diverse immigrant population.
- Students come from poor working families and they tend to be the first ones in the family to go to college.
- A number of students are single parents who work at area hospitals while continuing their education.
- Three scholarships are awarded, two to students pursuing associate degree in Nursing and one to a Business major.
- Scholarship Committee members are: Sneh Amar, Lisa Mickiewicz and Kusum Ketkar.
- Scholarship recipients are: Victoria Pardes, Sally Mentias and Kelly Kabeho.

9.3 Middlesex County College, Woodbridge

- Middlesex County is home to the largest concentration of immigrant population.
- Students earn their Associate degree from the College, and a large number of them go on to earn their Bachelors degree at Rutgers and other universities in NJ.
- Since 2006, WRG has facilitated education of 70 young women.
- A number of beneficiaries of WRG scholarship are survivors of ether spousal or parental abuse or abandonment.
- Scholarship Committee members are: Geeta Fozdar, Kusum Ketkar and Rita Burton.
- Scholarship recipients are: Ummi Aszmi, Aamna Farooq, Manleen Kaur, Komal Mir and Pooja Patel.

9.4: The Pro Beauty Academy, Edison, NJ

- Pro Beauty Academy is located in Edison. Edison is home to a diverse immigrant population, dominated by immigrants from the Indian subcontinent.
- Pro Beauty Academy offers comprehensive courses in cosmetology/ hairstyling, barbering, skin care and nail technology.
- Courses are specifically designed for students to receive a quality education and secure the State License after completing requirements as well as passing written and practical exams.
- Students also learn the value of professionalism in Cosmetology including high standards of workmanship and personal conduct.
- Courses run from six months to an year.
- Students graduate with knowledge and tools and ready to secure employment in all aspects of this fast growing beauty industry.
- Scholarship recipients are: Leslie Rivera and Aisha Rizvi.